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HARD TO WIN

MRS. GEORGE CUPPLES



**HARD TO WIN.**



**BY**

**MRS. GEORGE CUPPLES.**

MURRAY AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,  
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.





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OR,

A YOKE BROKEN.

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EDINBURGH:  
WILLIAM OLIPHANT & CO.,  
1878.

251. c. 681.



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## CHAPTER I.

‘Out of weakness they were made strong.’—HEB. xi. 34.

THE sunset, bright even through the smoke of more than half of London, was sinking away beyond the great dome of St. Paul's, the last rays of which, from that direction, found their way into a little garret room situated in a narrow court among the East End slums. The light glowed on the cracked plaster, and up about the dingy sloped ceiling, where the cobwebs had gathered, and the flies were creeping and fluttering with a wearisome buzz. In one corner was a low, scantily-covered bed, and lying on it was a woman, her form wasted by sickness, and her cheeks flushed with fever. She brightened up considerably at sight of the sunlight, and she even tried to raise herself a little way as if to enjoy it the

more. A girl about seventeen, who was sitting in the window, busily engaged over some white work, observed the movement, even though one might have thought she was quite absorbed in her sewing; and, laying it aside, she rose to shake up the pillows, the tears gathering in her large hazel eyes at sight of the growing weakness of the invalid.

‘It will be setting behind the old shire church just now, and making all the graves green and golden,’ said the sick woman with a heavy sigh. ‘It will never shine on mine, though, Jane; the houses stand so high and so close round the churchyards here, it can’t get in.’

‘Come, come, we are not going to be gloomy to-night, dear Mrs. Semple,’ said the girl, stroking the thin hair back into order under the clean but sadly worn nightcap. ‘Didn’t the doctor say he thought you were a little better to-day? You must try to cheer up and get well, for dear little Minnie’s sake.’

Mrs. Semple’s eyes filled with tears as she turned them towards the end of the bed, where a little girl about five years of age was lying sound asleep, her arm under her head, and her fair curls tossed about her face in confused luxuriance. ‘I’ll never be well again, Jane,’ said Mrs. Semple, making a great effort to compose herself. ‘I feel as though this was to be the last sunset my eyes will ever see. But,’ she added eagerly, ‘you’ll be a friend to Minnie; you’ll do your best to

keep her from growing up like the poor children here? Oh, if I had only tried to walk back to mother's before my strength gave way! but now it's too late, it's too late!'

'Oh, you must try not to distress yourself so, dear Mrs Semple!' said Jane, putting her arm lovingly round her friend. 'Minnie shall be sent to her grandmother's the very first moment possible. I shall soon be able to lay past a little money, now that I have got so much work to do. I owe you that much surely for all your kindness to me when dear mother died.'

Mrs. Semple shut her eyes, and Jane, thinking she had dropped off to sleep, as she often did for very weakness, returned to her work by the window. Mrs. Semple was not asleep, however, for Jane heard her saying, as if to herself, 'What was it the old gentleman said about sorrow and rest?'

'He said that in heaven, sorrow and sighing would flee away, and that there would be a glorious rest for the people of God,' replied Jane.

'Ay, for the people of God,' repeated Mrs. Semple, with a sigh. 'But oh, Jane, this life in London chokes every good thought. I often think the din and bustle must weary even Him.'

At this moment there came a light tap at the door, and Jane rose, saying joyfully, 'It's the old gentleman—it's Mr. Frazer; I should know his knock among a hundred.'





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and little child, but she had been able to help her next-door neighbours, poor Mrs. Martin being then in a dying state. It had been a great blessing to Mrs. Semple the having such respectable neighbours, for, like herself, Mrs. Martin had seen better days ; and as for the latter, the thought of Jane having a friend in Mrs. Semple was a source of comfort to her, and the last hours of the good woman were less painful in consequence. ‘ Truly the Lord has been gracious to me,’ she said, a few minutes before she died ; ‘ He has heard the prayer of the widow, and will not forsake the fatherless and the orphan in their time of distress.’

Not many days after Mrs. Martin died, Mrs. Semple heard again from her husband, and this time the packet contained ten gold pieces. In spite of her recent loss, Jane could not help brightening up at the sight of her friend’s good fortune, which she was generously made to share. But, alas ! their happiness was shortlived ; for only two days after, a policeman came to the house and informed Mrs. Semple that her husband had been arrested as an accomplice in a great house robbery, and at once proceeded to search the little room. It was not a difficult matter to do ; yet he made the most of it, shaking the old shawl that had been her mistress’ bridal present, turning up the blankets and the very straw in the old sacking, and examining even the smallest piece of paper or skein of thread. On a shelf he came upon the piece of oilskin that the first money had been rolled up in, which made him give a low whistle,







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clothes, and it was her wish to remain pure and virtuous ; so, having no friends to help her, she thought it was safer to trust to the mercy of the Almighty. It was an awful and a daring step to take ; and so, my dear, I just want you to promise me that if the worst comes to the worst you'll come and let me know. Now that you've taken upon yourself the care of that little child, it's sure to add to your burdens, for you can't take outdoor work, having no one to leave her with at 'ome ; but though I'm a poor woman, still I'd maybe be able to help you at a pinch.'

Jane thanked her with tears in her eyes. ' But, Mrs. Trigg, she said hopefully, ' I have got ever so many waistcoats to button-hole, and Mr. Phipps says he has more for me to do when I take these home. Besides, I'm expecting a friend, a very dear friend, soon, and when he comes both Minnie and I shall be well off.'

' I thought as how you had neither father nor brother?' said Mrs. Trigg inquiringly.

' No, no more I have, Mrs. Trigg,' said Jane, blushing ; ' it's Thomas Harris ; he was a shipmate of father's, only he was much younger, you know ; and we are going to be married when he comes back from the next trip,—that will be in two years ; and I'm to draw some of his pay then, as mother did father's. We'll go down to some nice little village on the Thames and live there, and the fresh air will do Minnie good.'

' I hope Thomas is a good fellow,' said Mrs. Trigg ; ' men

is men, my dear, and when a young girl is left so helpless she has need to be cautious, and sailors ain't overly steady at any time.'

'But some of them are, Mrs. Trigg, and father was one,' said Jane, almost proudly. 'Dear mother used to say father was an upright, God-fearing man; and that what he believed he practised, though among many temptations, as a sailor's life mostly is. Dear father,' added Jane, 'he lost his life trying to save a shipmate from drowning; I don't know all the story, but Thomas is to tell me the whole of it when he comes home, for he saw him spring over after the man. Oh, he was so kind and loving, was father, to every one!'

Poor Jane, young though she was, had had a great many hardships to endure since her father's death, for though she might have got employment in a shop, her mother had been too ill to be left alone. She was, however, of a naturally happy temperament, and had done her best to make the most of a hard lot.

'Very well, dear,' said Mrs. Trigg, rising to go, her mind much relieved, 'I do hope as this young man will turn out honest and good; but mind you come and tell me if things go contrary with you.'

Hopeful as Jane was, her life was by no means an enviable one; and though she worked hard at her sewing, she got very little pay for a very large amount of work. Minnie, too, took up some of her precious minutes; not that she ever grudged

them, but when the child cried for mother, Jane would lay aside her work, take the poor little motherless thing on her knee, and soothe her tenderly. 'Tell Minnie about the pitty angels wif the wings,' she would often say, alluding to a story Jane had told her about heaven, where both their mothers had gone. 'When will God send the angels to take Minnie to heaven? I'd 'ike to go now this very minuite.' Then Jane would clasp the little girl close to her and tell her she must not wish to leave her alone, for 'what would she do without her own little darling Minnie!' The very thought of how lonely her life would be without this little child to work for, seemed to paralyze Jane for ever so long. One bright spot Jane had to look forward to in her busy week, and that was the Sunday. Mr. Frazer preached in a little mission-house a few streets off from where Jane lived, and, no matter what was the weather, Jane was sure to be there, listening earnestly to the words of comfort and exhortation that fell from the worthy man's lips. Every Sunday morning Jane dressed herself and Minnie as tidily as their limited wardrobe would allow; and after breakfast, which was generally a very little better than on week-days, she rolled up a piece of bread to serve for dinner, and set out, intending not to return till night. Holding Minnie by the hand, whose face was as bright as soap and water could make it, and her beautiful hair combed carefully, they passed down the stair and through the crowd of squalid, dirty children that were rolling and tumbling about in the court

below. More than one of the women took notice of the two as they went quietly along, Mrs. Grimes saying, 'They were quite a pretty sight to see, almost like a fresh posy.'

'She's one of your 'igh-minded kind, though,' said Mrs. Brunton, Mrs. Grimes' next-door neighbour, and wife of the rough fellow Jane had spoken to on the stairs that day Mr. Frazer rebuked the men. 'Pride goes before a fall, they do say; and she'll be made to hold that 'ead of hers a little lower sometime, that's what I think.'

'I hope not,' said Mrs. Grimes; 'she's a civil-spoken, quiet girl, and she's so kind to that little child, whose father was put in quod for robbery, and her mother is dead now, poor little dear.'

'Yes; but she needn't 'old her 'ead so high when a neighbour wants to give her a help. You'd have thought I meant to murder the child the way she looked at me, and all because I told her I could set her up as a flower-girl, or get her in as a fairy or som'at to the penny-gaff, where my own Molly is making a few honest ha'pence every night singing of her songs and playing on her banjo.'

Mrs. Grimes was cautious how she replied to this statement, for Mrs. Brunton had a bit of a temper, and might do a spiteful thing, especially when she exceeded in drinking, which had been getting more frequent of late. She had only the week before flown into a terrible passion with one of the neighbours in the house below, for saying she wondered how she could



allow Molly to go to such a place, when her father earned as good wages as the other dock-men, and was generally kept on at slack times, when the others were paid off. Joe Brunton was looked upon as one of the 'lucky' men, only he had not been so fortunate where his wife was concerned; for she made his home so miserable by her drinking habits, that he was fast losing heart, and getting to be as bad in that respect as she was herself. If he had had a wife like Mrs. Grimes, now, some of the neighbours said, poor Joe Brunton might have been a well-doing man. There was Jim, by repute a resetter of stolen goods, with as comfortable a home as a man could have; but he was really one of the lucky sort, so said his friends, for he had always managed to keep out of the hands of the police, and was seldom seen the worse of drink. He paid his rent regularly; and kept not only a decent coat on his back, but supplied his wife with smart clothes, and in consequence was looked up to in the court as the most respectable man in it.

It was indeed a pretty sight to see Jane and her little charge sitting in the dingy mission-house, her eager face looking earnestly towards the preacher, as if afraid to lose a single word. That attentive hearer did much to strengthen Mr. Frazer during the trying work he was carrying on; her voice, when she joined in the singing of the psalms and hymns, refreshed him as the sound of one of his own mountain brooks would have done, whose strength was from the hills, because

it testified of Him who caused the tongues of the weakest of His creatures to praise Him. It drove the cobwebs from his brain, he said, and helped to strengthen him to fight the good fight. Even Mr. Frazer's strong constitution was beginning to feel the effect of such a heavy charge; the bustle and the foul air, the squalor and the sight of so much misery, were fast wearing him out, and he was beginning to long for his friend's return, when he would get away from it to a more congenial sphere. On this particular Sabbath, before leaving home, he had not tried to hide from his sister how fagged he really was, but said he would set out earlier, so as to take the walk to the mission-room leisurely. A little way from the door he overtook Jane and Minnie, and at once accommodated his rapid strides to suit the short steps of the latter. Jane noticed in a minute how tired he seemed to be, and said she hoped he felt well, thinking to herself how hollow his cheeks were beginning to look, and what a careworn expression was coming instead of the usual bright one. 'I'm only feeling a little wearied in body, my dear,' he replied; 'however willing the spirit is, the flesh is weak at times, and this life in this district is new to me. It makes me wish at times that I had wings like a bird, that I might flee away from the sight of so much misery. Do you not feel so too, my dear?'

'I don't know, sir,' said Jane ponderingly. 'I've got so used to it now; there is a great deal in custom, I suppose, sir. I have so many things to think about when I am

sewing, that I forget there is so much noise and misery round me.'

'Ah! "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." How true a saying that is! Thank you, my dear, your words have shown me clearly what I had been suspecting was the case before, that Satan has been trying to make me think I'm rather badly used, when I ought to be glorying in the thought that I am spending and being spent in the Lord's service. Oh, it is so nice to know that God makes the back fit for the burden! May He truly perfect His strength in our weakness this day!'





## CHAPTER IV.

By the time Mr. Frazer began his sermon, almost all trace of the wearied look had disappeared, and when he rose, every one felt by his manner he had something special to say ; nor were they disappointed, for if there had been one inattentive hearer they would have been roused into listening not only to the opening words themselves, but by the tone in which they were uttered. ‘I speak as a dying man to dying men ; lend me therefore your ears, my brethren, that I may pour into them the glorious message of the gospel. Let us meditate on a portion of the divine word, as you will find it contained in the three first verses of the 17th chapter of Saint John’s Gospel. There Jesus asks His Father to glorify Him in the giving of eternal life. “*Eternal life*, what is that ?” do any of my hearers say ? Harken to the words of Jesus Himself : “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”’

It is not our intention to repeat at length the good man’s

words ; suffice it to say that this address was blessed to many, and that Jane Martin dated the period of her conversion to it under God's mercy, and, in consequence, her whole future life was altered. The conscious impression upon her was made during his closing words, therefore we add them here: 'To those who have accepted of life eternal I say, see that you stand firm in the faith. Jesus is still pleading with the Father as He did for those followers He had while on earth. "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. . . . And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me."

' Ah, my friends, see to it, then, that by your walk and conversation ye seek to show forth Christ's glory. Pray earnestly, as He did for you, that while ye are in the world ye may be kept from the evil of it ; looking with straining eyes towards the reward for such faithfulness, the being made perfect in Him and beholding His glory. To those who believe not these things, and who have no wish even to make a beginning, I would tenderly say, "What shall it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul?" Ah, my friends, consider ; consider it before it be too late, that as certain as you came into the world naked and helpless and without

possessions, so will you go out of it, for man can take nothing to the grave. Believe, therefore, on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'

These last words Mr. Frazer uttered in a different voice from his usual placid tone, sending a perceptible thrill through every hearer. Then, in a minute after, came the kindly smile, as he lifted up his hand and said: 'Hearken! what does the hymn say?—

"I know not the way I am going,  
But well do I know my Guide;  
With a child-like trust I give my hand  
To the mighty Friend by my side.  
The only thing that I say to Him  
As He takes it, is,—'Hold fast!  
Suffer me not to lose my way,  
And bring me home at last.'"

'Oh, how good to know that God is "the way, the truth, and the life!"'

After the sermon was over, and the people had dispersed, Mrs. Trigg, on going into the little room that served for a vestry, was startled to find Mr. Frazer in a half-fainting condition. She ran for water to bathe his forehead, and after a time managed to get him to drink some, when he recovered slowly. 'The heat has been rather too much for you, sir, said the good woman. 'The room ain't properly ven-

tilated, they do say. It is bad enough when Mr. Hislop is here; but then, you see, since you came there are ever so many more hearers, and it makes the place so stuffy and chokey. I couldn't find a hinch of room for Joe Brunton, and I was sorry, for he han't been to no church or to chapel for ages and ages. He's gone off now with Jane Martin and Minnie, poor little dear, and I'm glad of it, for Jane is a good girl, and may say a word to him in season.'

'Ah, a word in season, how good is it!' murmured Mr. Frazer.

'And what's more surprising to me still,' continued Mrs. Trigg, hoping her conversation would cheer the good man, 'I caught a glimpse of Jim Grimes, the coster, who sells poultry, and who is not over-particular where he gets it, nor his game neither. He was a hovering round the door when the hymn was being sung, and he looked as if he would have come in too, only he caught sight of Joe in the porch, and went away as if ashamed to be seen by him. They live in the same court, does Jim and Joe, and so he mayhap thought he'd get a chaffing from the costers if it became known he had gone to chapel.'

'Then let us pray that God may take away this fear from his heart, my friend. The sneers of our fellow-men are a sad stumbling-block in many a one's way to Christ.'

'That they are indeed,' said Mrs. Trigg. 'I know I kept at home many a Sunday, just because Trigg chaffed me about

turning Methody ; but now I don't seem to mind what he says, I'm that happy, and He helps me to bear the taunts.'

Mr. Frazer decided to remain quietly in the little vestry till the evening service. He said he still felt slightly ill, and feared the walk in the sun would cause a return of the sickness ; but that he had no doubt if he remained quietly where he was he would be all right. Mrs. Trigg, noticing that 'his head was as heavy as lead,' hurried home to make a cup of tea to refresh him, and rolled up the teapot in an old shawl to keep it warm, as her house was some distance from the mission. While she was preparing the tea she suddenly thought it would be a good plan to take her sofa mattress and a pillow, and make up a couch for him on one or two of the forms, as he seemed so inclined to fall asleep. She therefore got two boys to help her to carry the necessary articles, breathing a sigh of relief at the thought that Trigg was out, drinking somewhere, she fancied, with some boon companions, so that she managed to carry out her good intentions without any hindrance. Mr. Frazer was truly thankful for the tea, and also for something to lie down upon, his head by this time being so painful that he could scarcely bear it. 'I do hope you ain't in for some illness, sir,' said Mrs. Trigg, 'your hands do feel hot, to be sure ; oughtn't you to go 'ome, sir?' But she only caught a few words, something about being spent, for Mr. Frazer's head was no sooner on the pillow than he was fast asleep. Mrs



Trigg sat patiently beside him, quite forgetting, in her anxiety, that her husband might return for his dinner; for though he often stayed away, he would occasionally take it into his head to come home, 'just to show his little woman who was master, and woe betide her if he did not catch her in apple-pie order, *that* was all.'

Mr. Frazer slept peacefully on till close upon the hour for evening service, and still Mrs. Trigg waited and watched, though every hour she grew more anxious. She had taken what she called a hasty snack when she was home for the tea, but otherwise she had tasted no food, nor did she feel hungry. Getting alarmed at the time he had slept, and his flushed face, she was just thinking to herself she had better go in search of a doctor, when Mr. Frazer awoke. 'Dear me, where am I? what have I really been doing?' he said. 'Ah, I recollect; I was somewhat fatigued after preaching, and you made me so comfortable, Mrs. Trigg, that I must have gone off to sleep at once. Thank you, my friend; I feel like a lion refreshed, quite able now for the remainder of the day's service.'

Though he said this in a cheerful tone, Mrs. Trigg had her misgivings. She was anxious to procure some further refreshment, and recollected Jane Martin lived close to the mission-house, and might have a cup of tea ready at that hour. The thought, too, did arise in her own mind that Trigg might be at home, and that it would be safer for her to keep out of his way till service was over; so she set out

in an opposite direction. Jane was at home; but, alas! her funds were too low to allow her to have tea twice a day, and she had finished it all in the morning. Little Minnie, understanding that the good friend the missionary was in want of food, ran to Mrs. Trigg with her piece of bread for 'dood Misser Frazer,' as she called him. In the dilemma, Jane thought of Mrs. Grimes, and went with Mrs. Trigg to explain what was required; and, fortunately, owing to three prosperous days, the larder was not only full, but overflowing. 'A cup of tea! Of course he shall have that. It's no use sending him any brandy, nor yet a drop of beer, for he said he wouldn't drink it for anything; but I've got as prime a slice of roast beef left over from our dinner, and a baked potato, still 'ot in the hoven, and the dear good gentleman is as welcome to it as the flowers in May.'

There wasn't a happier woman than Mrs. Trigg as she laid down the tempting roast beef before Mr. Frazer; but her distress was all the greater when she found he could only eat a very tiny bit, though he drank the cup of tea most heartily. When Mr. Frazer stood up in the reading-desk, it was evident to every one he was very ill indeed, so that they were not surprised when, in the middle of his sermon, he suddenly said, 'My friends, I feel I cannot go on any longer; I must therefore ask you to excuse me.'

'That will we, sir,' said an old man in the front seat, 'though sorry on account of the cause; and may God bless

you, sir,' to which the whole congregation, as by one accord, said, 'Amen.'

A few minutes before this, a little boy had stepped into the mission-house, tugged Mrs Trigg's shawl, and whispered loud enough for more than one to hear, 'Trigg's come 'ome, and he's in a hawful rage, so you're to come off at once, and he says he won't play with you this time.' Poor Mrs. Trigg turned a white face to Jane Martin, and asked her to see to the locking up of the doors in case she did not get back again in time. It was Jane, therefore, who was in the vestry to receive Mr. Frazer; but he was too ill to notice the absence of the worthy woman. One of the men had sent off to the nearest railway station for a cab, and Mr. Frazer was conducted to it through a crowd of sincere well-wishers. 'There goes as good a man as ever walked,' said one of the men; 'I do believe he's killed hisself trying to make folks better. They tell me he's out early and late trying to coax men out of the grog-shops.' 'He do work very hard,' said another; 'I only wish there were more like him, I do,'—a sentiment that seemed to win universal approbation from all around.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Trigg having gone home, Jane Martin locked the doors, and followed her with the keys. When she reached the court at the end of which Mrs. Trigg stayed, Jane found the door slightly open, and on receiving no answer to the knock, she pushed it open, where a sad sight met her

gaze. There lay poor Mrs. Trigg, bleeding profusely from a wound in her right temple, her poor old black gown torn to pieces, and her well-worn bonnet crushed and broken as if it had been trampled under foot. By the help of some of the neighbours, who came to Jane's help at her request, the worthy woman was brought round at last; but it did seem a long time to Jane, who was not accustomed to such sights. 'Oh, this ain't the first time, my dear,' said one of the women to her. 'Trigg is most brutal, and she's so patientful. He ought to be sent to jail for this, that he ought, only she'll not hear of it ever.'

'No, no! it's the drink that's done it,' said Mrs. Trigg faintly. 'He'll be sorry when he comes to hisself, I know.'

It was ever so many days before Mrs. Trigg was able to be out again; and as for Mr. Frazer, the sad news soon reached Jane's ears that he was stricken down with fever. Thus on the same day, Jane Martin was deprived for the time of the help and countenance of the only friends who had shown her sympathy during her first days of trial.







## CHAPTER V.

FROM this day a new life began for Jane Martin and little Minnie. The former had come home deeply impressed with the words she had heard; for though she had always been a thoughtful girl, and carefully instructed in Bible truths by her mother, she had not till now been born again into newness of life. She was in a great state of tremor, and could scarcely believe in her conversion being genuine, for she did not feel terror or great distress of mind on account of sin, as she supposed every true penitent would do, but felt rather full of holy joy that her earnest prayer to God to give her a new heart had been answered, and that Christ had indeed entered in. Now she was experiencing the knowledge of being one with Him, and, having given herself up to Him, she felt her sins were indeed forgiven her. Half of the night she spent in prayer to God for His mercy in the past, and entreated Him that He would indeed keep her unspotted from the world, at the same time beseeching Him to try her and prove her, and

see if there were any wicked way in her, that she might be led in the way everlasting. When she rose in the morning, her heart was still full of this happy knowledge, and overflowing to God on account of it. She prepared the breakfast, which consisted of a little boiling water being added to the tea leaves of the previous day, and a piece of dry bread for each, Minnie getting the largest share. After the cups had been washed and the room made tidy, Jane set out with the parcel of finished work, leaving Minnie employed cutting out a few of the pictures from the odd leaves of the newspapers. The little girl was quite accustomed to be left alone now, and heard the key turn in the lock without a sigh, for she knew Jane would bring her her dinner,—perhaps a herring, or a piece of pudding, or something nice, as this was pay-day. Alas! poor Minnie's expectations were doomed to disappointment, for, on reaching the shop, Jane was distressed beyond measure to find her employer was about to give up business and leave London, having got a good offer for his warehouse; and as it was to be pulled down to make room for a larger building, she had not even the prospect of getting work from a new proprietor. The man was truly sorry for her, and, taking compassion upon her pale face, he added a shilling to the payment due, saying that he hoped she would fall in with some suitable work ere long.

‘You should purchase a few flowers to sell,’ he said. ‘That

comely face of yours would be as good as a five-pound note to you.'

Jane thanked him, but said her mother had had a horror of her selling anything on the streets, and that as for being a domestic servant, as he next proposed, she had taken charge of a little girl belonging to a neighbour now dead, and that she could not forsake her.

'Ah, well,' said the shopman, 'friendship has its duties, no doubt; but my advice to you is, get the child into the Union as soon as you can.'

As Jane walked slowly home, she thought of Minnie with her innocent clinging ways and her sweet lisping prattle, and tried to picture her with her hair cut close and her blue affrighted eyes turned upon the group of rough children. 'She'd break her little heart in a week,' said Jane, with a shudder. 'No; I must beg my way to her grandmother's before that day comes.' Then she began to turn over in her mind all the promises in the Scriptures,—promises for this world as well as for the next. 'Who knows but God is going to take this way to prove me?' she said; and she tried to pray earnestly that He would help her to bear whatever He saw fit to lay upon her with patience. The few pence she had earned were carefully laid away in her little box,—a very few they seemed to be when the one shilling and fourpence had been put aside for the week's rent,—but she tied on Minnie's hat and cape quite cheerfully, saying, 'Come along, dear; God will send



Jane some work to do soon.' Minnie quite forgot her disappointment of her expected dinner in the delight of going out for a walk, and Jane could hardly keep her eager feet in check as they went down the stairs together. Mrs. Grimes, who happened to be going out at the same time, expressed her surprise at seeing them out at that hour of the day; but her question was answered by Minnie, who explained in her own way that they were going to get some work to do, and that Jane said God would send it, and then Minnie would have a penn'orth of pudding once more.

'I'm sorry to hear the work has stopped, my dear,' said Mrs. Grimes kindly; 'it's worse for you, who have never been accustomed to hawk anything about. This has been a very bad week for both me and Grimes, else I'd have tried to give you a lift, I would. But here's a penny for the puddin', little lass; and if we have better luck to-day, I'll call up to you, and you must drop in when Grimes and me are having our bit of supper,—there's always plenty going then. If we have a bad day, it will be just as well to keep out of my old man's way, them bad days do try his temper, they do.'

Jane put off buying the pudding as long as possible, for even this gift of a penny was a help to her. She had wandered from shop to shop without success, and greatly feared the little girl might have some hungry days before her, so that she had need to keep her own pennies carefully. It

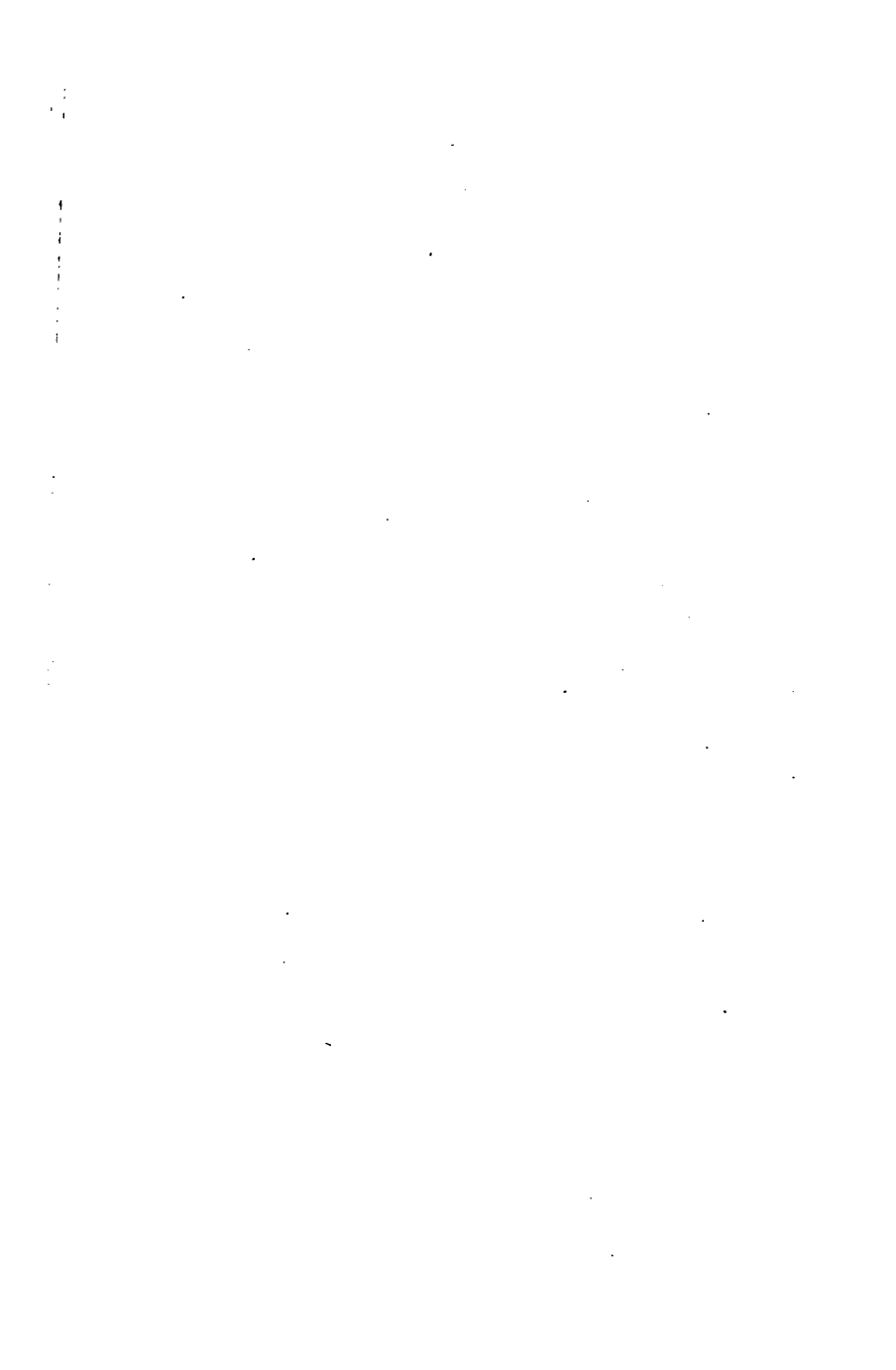
was a weary week that, and at the end of it her little store had sadly diminished, and her face was beginning to show traces of hunger. Mrs. Grimes had either forgotten her promise about the supper, or trade was still at a low ebb with them, for Jane never saw her again; and as for Joe Brunton, he had gone off in a fit of disgust at his wife, who was drinking harder than ever, and was never to be seen at home. The other neighbours, too, had quite enough to do with themselves, and were hard put to it to provide the daily bread. To add to Jane's troubles, her friend, poor Mrs. Trigg, had been so brutally used on account of the disappearance of the sofa cushion, that she had been taken away to the hospital; and as there were several witnesses to prove her husband's wicked conduct, he had been taken before the magistrate, and sent to prison for ten days with hard labour.

At the end of the court, in a corner of it, was a tumble-down shed, and one afternoon, when Jane was returning from a long and unsuccessful tramp, she observed an old man standing by it, unyoking a small donkey from a little cart. She had seen him more than once, and knew the neighbours thought him morose and sulky in his disposition, hating to be spoken to by any one, and never frequenting a public-house, nor so much as sending for or fetching himself a drop of beer. Strange to say, however, he was a favourite with all the children, and none of them ever attempted to make

fun of him, as they did of old Tim Dobbs, the cat-and-dog's-meat man, whose donkey occupied a similar shed at the other end of the court. Old Turfy, as the former was called, for want of any knowledge of a proper name, and because he cut and sold turf to those who had larks and other birds, seemed to be deaf to any disparaging remarks when made about his personal appearance, whereas old Tim's temper was like gunpowder—it flared up at a single word. Besides all this, Turfy not only had given an old coat on Guy Faux day, but always remembered 'the grotter' when it was built, every year to the extent of sixpence, which liberality insured him from being molested by the boys of the court from one year's end to the other. They would even leave off in the middle of the most exciting game of pitch and toss, to give old Clover, as they called the donkey, a kindly clap, and engage in a frolic with him, when Clover, who had a quick nose, would scent a piece of bread in any pocket in a moment. On this particular afternoon the donkey was surrounded by half a dozen boys, who were trying to keep him from getting at a piece of bread in one of the jackets. At last it was pulled out, and Clover, in the greatest glee, and being freed from the cart, rushed off round the court with the bread in his mouth. Just as he was passing Jane, he dropped it, when Minnie, who had only tasted a small crust that day, made a sudden rush at it, and before Jane could stop her, was eating it ravenously. Clover came to a dead stand before the little girl,



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and gazed at her with his long ears drawn forward, and with as puzzled an expression as a donkey ever had, till the bread had disappeared. At this moment Jane felt the ground suddenly giving way under her feet, her ears were full of strange sounds, and she sank down in unconsciousness upon the pavement. When she recovered her senses, she was surprised to find herself propped up in a comfortable easy-chair close to a window that opened on to a carpenter's woodyard; on the sill were a few bright flowers, and hanging on the wall close by, a cage with a lark in it, that kept trilling and singing as if its throat would burst in thankfulness and delight over the fresh turf that had just been given to it. The room was at the back of Clover's shed, indeed was a portion of the carpenter's property, and was as clean as possible; the bed that stood at one end was covered with a bright patched bedcover, and a corner cupboard had ever so many pretty cups and plates in it, and by the side of the door hung a clock with a ship in full sail painted upon the pendulum. Old Turfy was busily engaged cooking some savoury stuff over the fire, his occupation being eagerly watched by little Minnie, who kept smacking her lips as if she felt the taste of it in her mouth. He was quick to notice that Jane was awake, and hastened to pour out a little of the soup into a cup, handing it to her with a smile, and a kindly 'Drink that, my dear, it'll put some life into you.' At the same time, Minnie got a small bowl all to herself, and a large piece of bread, which

she received with a sigh of intense satisfaction and a 'Tank you edy much.'

When the table was cleared, Old Turfy sat down and looked at Jane earnestly, then suddenly said, 'Hunger, I suppose?'

'I can't ever thank you enough for your kindness,' said Jane. 'Yes, I suppose it was hunger; the sight of Minnie eating the bread made me sick.'

'Ay, I know it's a horrid feeling. I've known me go miles round to keep myself away from the shops so as not to see the food in the windows. But what are you going to do now?'

'Oh, I must go home with Minnie at once. I am taking up your time,' said Jane, hastily rising. She was forced, however, to sit down again, owing to a return of the dizziness.

'No, no, my dear, there's no hurry; what I meant was, how are you going to earn your bread? for I plainly see you are out of work.'

'I really don't know what to do,' replied Jane, the tears slowly trickling down her cheeks. 'They won't trust their work out of the workrooms; but I can't leave Minnie so long alone.'

'There's the Union, you know,' said Turfy slowly; 'but,' he continued, seeing Jane's distressed look, 'ah, well, I don't wonder to see you shake your head; she's too tender and soft a little thing to go there, and yet something must be done.' He sat twisting and turning his under lip between his thumb and finger for ever so long. 'I have it, my dear,' he said at last.

'You'll trust her to me and Clover; she can sit in a corner of the cart; she'll be all the better of some fresh air, and she'll enjoy running about the grass when I'm cutting the turf.'

Jane held out her hand, for her heart was too full for words to thank him sufficiently. 'Oh, how good God is,' she murmured, 'to raise up a friend to me in time of need!'

'Yes, God is edy good,' said Minnie. 'He made Clover be a good kind donkey, and sent him wif a piece of bread to Minnie; and now Minnie has had nice soup, and Minnie must give 'oo a kiss for making the pain go away.' She jumped off the box, and held up her sweet face towards Turfy's rough weatherbeaten one, pressing up her lips in readiness like a rosebud.

The old turf-cutter stooped down and kissed her. Lifting her up in his arms, he held her close to him for a minute, then set her back on to the box with a sigh.

'If there *is* a God,' he said, 'would He let such a pretty flower perish for want? I don't believe, then, in no such a Being.'

'Oh, how dreadful!' said Jane, with a shudder. 'Oh, I do believe He cares for us, and in His own good time He will supply all our wants. His ear is not shut against our prayers.'

'You believe that, do you?' said the old man, with a steadfast look into Jane's face,—'you that are nigh-hand dying of hunger?'



‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,’ said Jane solemnly. ‘My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. He will feed me with the bread of life that cometh down from heaven, for my trust is in Christ my Saviour.’





## CHAPTER VI.

THE next morning Jane was roused at a very early hour by hearing a great commotion on the stair leading to her attic, and on looking out she saw a man coming up, followed by a woman and half a dozen children, every one carrying some article of furniture, large baskets, or pewter quart pots for measuring fruit, while one little fellow had a pair of scales under one arm and a miserable-looking cat tucked securely under the other. They were the new tenants for Mrs. Semple's room, and Jane saw at a glance that they were a very different class of neighbours from what she had lately been accustomed to. 'Oh, my poor Minnie,' she said, 'how am I ever to keep her from being contaminated by such companions!' She had yet to learn, however, that it is sometimes safer not to judge from appearances; for though the children were certainly ragged and noisy, the parents were hard-working, honest people. Her first intention was to shut her door, turn the key in the lock, and have nothing to do

with them; but one of Mr. Frazer's favourite verses came to her mind, 'Be ye kindly affectioned one towards the other.' In a moment she was in the middle of the tired but noisy group, helping to light the fire, and then to arrange the few articles of furniture they had with them. While thus occupied, she learned that their name was Brown, that the man had been a costermonger all his life, and had once been in a good way of doing; only sickness had brought both him and his wife to sore straits, and they were now selling whelks. The two eldest girls sold water-cresses; the boy, newspapers and fusees; and the younger ones looked after the baby and helped to 'worm' and clean the whelk shells. When Mrs. Brown heard that Jane was out of employment, and objected to hawk things about the streets, she said she would be glad to have her help indoors, for that if she would take the boiling of the shell-fish off her hands during the day, she would be able to go round with her husband to help him to sell vegetables in the morning. In a very short time, Jane became quite expert at boiling the whelks; and as Mrs. Brown explained that when the shells looked bright and clean it helped the sale greatly, Jane was very particular to rub every shell separately, so that Mrs. Brown declared customers bought the moment their eyes fell on her tray. Samuel Brown was an enterprising man, and finding that Jane was so conscientious and willing, the moment he had a little spare money he added hot eels to his business, and was even talking

of trying something else to draw custom. Jane was kept very busy; but though her back often ached, and she felt sick many a time with the smell of the cooking, she was too thankful of the employment to dream of thinking herself overworked.

One Saturday morning, being extra busy, the door opened, and a bronzed, weather-beaten face appeared in the doorway, causing all the children to stare with astonishment at the unusual interruption, and Minnie to hide her face behind an old rag doll she carried about with her everywhere. Jane, who was enveloped in a cloud of steam, was too intent upon her work to look round, but, fancying it was one of the children just returned, and feeling by the air that was finding its way in that the door was still open, she called out, 'Shut the door, dear, else Mrs. Brunton will be coming up to scold us again about the smell of the cooking.'

'And I don't wonder at it, too; why, whatever are you about, Jane Martin?'

Jane turned her head round quick enough now, for she recognised the voice of Thomas Harris, and in her excitement she very nearly drew the huge fish-kettle over upon herself. It was both a joyful and a sorrowful meeting to both, for the recollection of the day they had last met came vividly to their minds,—how happy they had all been together.

‘There was dear father,’ as Jane said, ‘trying to cheer poor mother; and there were you, Thomas, making us all laugh by your jokes about bringing home a monkey to me; and the weather, too, it was just lovely! I often think and dream of the walk we had along the lane, so full of dog-roses and flowers; I feel the scent in my nostrils yet; and I often fancy I hear the birds singing as they did that last day you and father were ashore.’

‘Ay, it was a day to be remembered by both of us, specially by me, for it was then you promised you’d be my own little wife some day; and now I come back to find you as poor as poor, boiling nasty-smelling fish for an old hawker, and all the roses gone out of your cheeks, and scarcely a bit of the old little girl left except her dear honest eyes and her sweet voice, that’s sweeter than any bird.’ Then Thomas said he insisted upon their being married at once, so that she might draw the largest half of his pay, and proposed to go off to see about a special licence, so that they could be married on the Monday morning first thing. ‘There ain’t a moment to lose, my girl,’ he said, rising to put his words into execution; ‘we’re to sail again on Wednesday night. I couldn’t go away leaving you in such misery unless; but now you and this little friend o’ yours will live like ladies till I come again.’

They had gone into Jane’s room with little Minnie to have a quiet talk, and the sight of the poverty-stricken state of the little apartment made the honest heart of the sailor ache.

Jane wished—oh, so earnestly! that her mother or Mrs. Semple had been spared, or that some female acquaintance were near her who could advise her, for a conflicting stir of natural feelings filled her mind, the more so from the unexpectedness of the event. She could not, indeed, just make sure that she was quite ready in such a sudden way to undertake the responsibility of a wife, but she was too sensible a girl to throw obstacles in the way, such as the want of proper clothes to appear in at church, or give any such reason for delay, and in the end she agreed to the marriage banus being procured.

Thomas would have carried Jane off then and there to spend the afternoon in the Zoological Gardens, after the special licence had been got, but she had promised Mrs. Brown she would have all the eels and whelks ready by five o'clock; and, knowing so many lives were depending on the sale of what she prepared, she at once asked Thomas to excuse her. Sailor-like, he was a little impatient at not being able to have his own way,—the first day he was on shore, too; but, seeing Jane's eyes full of tears at his impatient words, he said, 'Never mind, my lass. I'll set off now and see about the licence, and when your cooking is over, we'll go and see what they are after in one of the big theatres. I shouldn't wonder, now, this little friend of yours ain't a bit too young but that she can enjoy a play along with us.'

Jane's pale face flushed red, and then grew deadly pale.

Some months ago she would have been perfectly delighted at the thought of going to a theatre, but now she dare not waste her precious time in any such place. And yet it did seem hard to refuse again what Thomas had proposed for her pleasure. It was the first time she had been called to show upon which side she stood, and she had to own afterwards to herself, with bitter tears, she made a miserable beginning; for instead of telling him plainly of her altered feelings, she made quite another excuse. 'It's very good of you, Thomas,' she said, 'but I would rather not go there to-night. Think of the short time you are to be on land; couldn't we rather take a quiet walk? I want to hear about your last voyage, and everything that has happened to you since we parted. Remember, too,' she added, 'I have not heard anything about dear father's death.'

'He was as true a heart of oak as ever stepped a deck, was your father,' said Thomas heartily; 'ay, and died doing his duty. He'd have been saved, too, if the mate had got his will; but the captain fancied a boat couldn't live in such a sea, and gave contrary orders just when we were about to lower away. I would have sprung in to his rescue, as he had done to save one of our shipmates who was lost too, but it wasn't of the least use; and I can tell you what, Jane, my heart nigh-hand burst itself, it did, when the captain gave orders to lower the flag to him by way of good-bye, and we saw him stop swimming then, and then wave his hand to us

as if he knew our meaning, and that it was all up with him. And so it was, too, for the next moment he joined his hands above his head, and went down. But cheer up, Jane ; don't cry and fret like that, my girl. There's no occasion for you to be down in the dolefuls ; for, do ye see, he was ready to go if ever a man was, and I only wish there were more like him afloat. It's a short life and a merry one with the most of us ; and why not ?'

' Oh, Thomas, don't you speak like that, dear ! I ought to have told you out plain that I've made up my mind to be a Christian out and out,—not in name only, but to do my best to serve the Saviour faithfully. I'll rather spend my time reading about Him and thinking of all He has done for me, than wasting it in a theatre ; and it would be so nice if you would try to think so too.'

' It's all very well for you to turn Methody ; all women are set that way, I suppose. But look here, my girl, if you were days, and weeks, ay, and months at sea, you'd be glad of a few hours' pleasure ashore. Your father, mind you, was one in a thousand in that way. He stood clear of all grog-shops and gambling booths at home and abroad ; he had a knack of giving them a wide berth ; and he'd be sure to be found cruising about among the bazaars in search of eurios, or showing the lads all the strange churches or buildings. I must say we were one and all the better of it after, for the strange yarns he would spin about the things he had seen



kept us merry and gay when we were once more safely afloat again.'

'And why can't you be like father and do as he did, Thomas?' said Jane.

'Just because I'm a different make of a man altogether, you see. He had such a ready way of taking the laugh against him, ay, and sometimes turning it upon the one that started it, too; but with me, I can't stand it, and so I set to, to try the weight of my fists, for being made game of always did set my temper up. It ain't easy to bear, I can tell you; and I've seen even your father's cheeks go afire at times when he was pressed extra hard. But,' continued Thomas, with a laugh, 'don't you be fretty about me now; I'm no worse than the run of seamen,—mayhap, between ourselves, a little better. When a mate dies and is lowered overboard, I do feel his loss badly, and in course have a spell at my Bible, and take a thought of where we are all hastening to, I does; and in a storm, too, I says "Our Father" as steadily as I can, and "This night when I lie down to sleep," the little prayer I used to say at mother's knee regular, but it's as good a one as a man can have, be he ever so old; for after all, if we get the Lord to keep our souls, what more do we want?'

'I wish dear Mr. Frazer the missionary were here!' said Jane, with a sigh; 'he would have been sure to make you see it is one's duty to be thinking more about our eternal salvation than anything else in the world.'

‘And very proper, too, my lass,’ said Thomas. ‘But what I say is, a sailor ha’n’t much time to be thinking of anything beyond his work, specially if he has as hard a second mate as we had this trip, who keeps you scraping and tarring down every spare moment, so that you can’t as much as stretch your arms, so to speak. It’s easy for folk ashore to be thinking of the life beyond; but when it’s turn in and turn out from morning to night in all sorts of weather, the bad coming uppermost, as is mostly the case, and with a mate holloing at you for a set of idle fellows, you han’t time for such a luxury as thinking, ’cept it be, mayhap, that you’re as hard-used a chap as ever came into the world.’

‘Then why don’t you give it up and stay ashore, Thomas? Oh, do,’ said Jane.

‘Cause I’ve got used to it with all its drawbacks. We sailors must have our growl, you know, my dear, and there *must* be sailors. Some time, when you and I have got that little cottage home we used to speak about, with the roses and the flowers all a-growing, and with a seat in the porch where I am to sit of an evening and smoke my pipe and spin you all my yarns, then that will be the time for me turning Methody and going to church regular, as all shore folk ought to do.’

Jane sighed, but was forced to be content, hoping that it would indeed come all right in time,—comforting herself, too, with the thought that her father had been very fond of

Thomas, and had not only given his consent to their marriage, but had seemed pleased she had chosen him.

‘Here am I sitting chattering,’ said Thomas, rising once more to go. ‘I ought to be looking after that ’ere licence if we’re to be married on Monday morning, so I’ll just step round to the nearest public-house and ask the man where I’m to find the gentleman who sells such papers; he’ll most likely know all about it, for I must own I’m at a loss, seeing as how I never made such a purchase afore.’ Pulling out a handful of gold coins, he handed two sovereigns to Jane, insisting upon her taking them, to buy something good for supper, as he said, for he intended to be back to eat it ‘I’ll bring our dinner for to-morrow myself, and we’ll go to church or meeting, whichever you please to fix.’

Catching up Minnie in his arms, he tossed her up to the ceiling and kissed her before putting her down, promising her a fine doll on his return. For a minute Minnie’s eyes sparkled, but the next they filled with tears. ‘Minnie no want Jane’s sailor to go away,’ she said, with quivering lip, ‘for Jane will cry when the rain and the wind comes. Jane’s sailor must come back edy edy soon, and not wait to buy a doll.’

‘I’ll be back in a very short time, my little dear,’ said Thomas, kissing her once more. ‘I shan’t let the sharpest barnacle stick to my shoes, I tell you. But what does Jane say more about her sailor?’

'Jane asks God to keep him safe and bring him home again edy soon,' said Minnie solemnly.

The rough face of the sailor softened, and an unusual moisture found its way to the corners of his eyes. He could not say more than 'God bless you, Jane,' for the rising of the ball in his throat; but he wrung her hand, patted Minnie kindly on the head, and the next moment he was gone.







## CHAPTER VII.

POOR Jane Martin's troubles were by no means at an end ; for, as it turned out, she had need of a large amount of patience and Christian fortitude to sustain her at the very time when the cup of happiness seemed ready to her lips. Having managed to get all Mrs. Brown's cooking done, she took Minnie out with her to make the various purchases for the supper. She could not help feeling that surely now all her troubles were at an end ; and as they walked briskly along, she inwardly thanked God over and over again for His goodness to her. In passing a public-house at the corner of one of the streets, there was such a noisy group at the door that she lifted Minnie in her arms and crossed to the other side as quickly as possible to avoid them. Minnie turned her head towards the crowd, and gave a cry of alarm ; but Jane, fancying she was afraid of the rough men, hastened along faster than ever.

‘ Oh, Minnie will whip ’em for hurting the poor sailor

man !' cried Minnie, struggling to get out of Jane's arms ; but though Jane heard the words quite distinctly, she never fancied for a moment that the noisy crowd, who were evidently trying to keep some one in who would much rather be out, had anything to do with her or her future prospects. She went swiftly along the first turning, and stopped at the window of a small eating-house, the sight of the good things placed there at once taking up Minnie's attention. The little girl was eager to buy a portion of everything the window contained, but Jane instinctively shrank from the thought of spending any of the two sovereigns, and contented herself with purchasing some tripe, a fried sole, and a few baked potatoes, all of which she managed to pay for with her own earnings, counting on the money given her for future requirements, if such there should be. She then hastened home, passing the public-house once more, where only a few children lounged round ; and the noise of mirth and laughter issued through the half-open door, as the waiters and tapsters hurried in and out of the various rooms to supply the customers. The tripe was put in Jane's single saucepan, and set by the side of the fire to stew, and the sole placed on a plate in front of it, along with the potatoes, to keep hot. A small tablecloth—the only one left of a goodly stock of home-made napery, the handiwork of Jane's maternal grandmother, who was a Scotchwoman—was laid on the table, and everything placed in readiness.

Mrs. Brown, coming home in the course of the evening, looked in to Jane's room, and expressed her surprise at the unusual set out ; but all Jane said, was that she expected a friend to supper, and Mrs. Brown was in too great a hurry to make further inquiries.

'We're doing the briskest trade to-night as ever we did,' she said. 'We've sold the whole of the second lot, and now here I am up again for more. I'm taking all you've boiled this afternoon ; for Samuel he says, he thinks we'll get rid of it all immediately, for do ye see there's a jolly chap is a treating of the whole company round like a gentleman. I'd have asked you to boil us some of those we laid in salt, but you're tidied up for the night, so I shan't trouble you.'

Jane was very glad Mrs. Brown decided to let her off, for in spite of herself, she was thankful to think her present employment was so soon to be at an end. Poor little Minnie was sadly puzzled at her friend's behaviour, for Jane was every now and then pouncing upon her to kiss her and give her a friendly hug, and as suddenly setting her down again. She seemed, too, to be quite unable to answer any of the little girl's questions, just as if she had become quite deaf, for she did not seem to hear a word Minnie said. At last Jane made a great effort to compose herself, and, taking Minnie on her knee, she sat down by the fire, and sang to her as many hymns as she knew. But hour after hour



passed, and still Thomas Harris never appeared, and Jane had to take the supper from the fire, lock her door for the night, and go to bed with an anxious heart. 'He will come again to-morrow, dear,' she said to Minnie. 'Perhaps he has had some trouble about the paper, and it kept him too late.' But still Jane was uneasy, though she could scarcely have given a reason for it. She was thankful when the daylight dawned, for she could not sleep, so rose and dressed herself, then sat down close under her little skylight window to read her Bible. Opening it at a venture at Isaiah, she read, 'For a moment have I forsaken thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer!' Was it possible, she thought to herself, that she had been doing anything to cause the Lord to turn His face from her? And then she recollected, when speaking to Thomas Harris, how ashamed she had felt to confess that she had made up her mind in earnest to follow Christ fully. 'We are made partakers with Christ, I know,' said Jane, her breast heaving with suppressed emotion, 'if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; but I have been letting myself slip backwards at the very outset. Oh, if Mr. Frazer were only here to guide me, or if I could only find his address, that I might go to him to ask him what I should do! Ah,' continued Jane, 'there I am again, trusting in Mr. Frazer, and forgetting that I can go to Him who alone can help me!' She opened her

Bible once more, this time at the New Testament, praying that He would direct her thoughts to some portion suitable to her sad case. Nothing could be more so than the chapter and verses that lay before her. 'Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'

Jane had just sunk upon her knees to pray for needed strength to fight the good fight of faith, when a knock came to the door, and on opening it she found a little boy standing. Her hope that he had come with a message from Thomas Harris was short-lived; for, after looking at her for a moment, he said, 'You're the gell that has Semple's little horphin living with you?'

Jane said she was.

'Then I've come to tell ye that old Turfy is took bad, and he'll be glad if you'll come down and take a look at him, while I go to fetch the doctor. I've gived Clover his breakfast, for Turfy knows he's fond of me,—likes me better than any boy in the court; and he knows, too, I am to be trusted to do it fair, and not prig his corn. He won't let me feed the lark, Turfy won't; but I've lighted his fire, and put on the

kettle, so you can make him a cup of tea, or anything you please, straight off.'

Hearing Mrs. Brown was moving about her room, Jane tapped at the door to ask her to give a look after Minnie in case she woke, adding, not without a good deal of confusion in manner, that if any one called asking for her, she would be glad if Mrs. Brown would send any of the children down to Turfy's for her, explaining that she had been sent for by the old man, as he was ill.

Poor Turfy was really very ill indeed; but Jane was able to do a good deal for him to make him more comfortable, and at last he fell asleep. Leaving the little boy, who still lingered about Clover's shed, to watch in case the old man awoke, Jane went up to see what Minnie was about, and found her dressed, and sharing a hearty breakfast with Mrs. Brown's children.

'We had such very good luck last night, that we have plenty and to spare,' said the good woman. 'Come, sit you down, Jane, and have a cup of coffee. We have some prime ham; I'm sure you'll be all the better of it.'

Jane was, however, in no humour to eat; and as Minnie seemed to be very comfortable, and had no wish to leave her present hospitable quarters, Jane said she would go down to the old man again, repeating once more her request to be sent for if any one came to her room.

'Who is this sailor little Minnie is talking about?' said

Mrs. Brown. 'She has been telling Lucy all sorts of stories about him coming to see you, and you crying when the rain and the wind blow; but it's all so mixed up with her baby way of talking, that I can't exactly say I can make it out. Perhaps he's your brother? Is it him you are expecting to come and see you to-day?'

'Yes,' said Jane, her face flushing to the temples. 'He isn't my brother, but a very dear friend. I half expected him last night, but he had some business to see about, and it most likely kept him too late, so he may come to-day.'

'What like was he, my dear?' said Mrs. Brown; but Jane was half-way down the stairs by this time, for the girls were at home, and she did not care to be questioned further before them. Mrs. Brown turned away with a sorrowful shake of the head, but she kept her thoughts to herself for the time being, whatever they were. When the elder children had gone out, however, she said to her husband, 'I say, Samuel, I shouldn't wonder if that sailor we made so much money out of last night was a friend of Jane Martin's. She's been expecting one to call, and you recollect how hard he did try to get away.'

'Ay, I tell you what, wife, I was sorry for him; but you see we don't get such a good customer every night, so it would have been madness to have interfered. After a time, too, he settled down, and was quite merry, and threw about his money as if he had the gold of the Indies at his back.'

‘I’d be real downright sorry if it turns out he’s Jane’s friend, for she’s a good girl,’ said Mrs. Brown. ‘I wonder what’s come over him!’

‘He’s been took charge of by some of the crimpers, most likely, and he’ll be safely enough in their clutches till all his money and more be gone. If I thought he was anything to Jane, I’d go and hunt him up this minute.’

‘One good turn deserves another, certainly,’ said Mrs. Brown. ‘He gave us a good lift last night, and what he bought from us didn’t do him no manner of harm anyhow, whatever the rest did. I shouldn’t wonder, now, but they drugged his drink. There were those about who were up to any trick of the kind.’

While Samuel Brown was giving himself his Sunday wash and brushing up, Mrs. Brown went down to Turfy’s to have a talk with Jane; and the end of it was that the poor girl was thrown into a terrible state of mind. She jumped to the conclusion at once that it could be none other than Thomas Harris, the more especially when she found it was the same public-house she had passed, where, she now recollected, Minnie had called out they were hurting the sailor. She explained about the special licence, and the wedding that was to have been on the Monday morning, and would have set out instantly in quest of him, but Mrs. Brown persuaded her such a thing was quite out of the question,—that her husband would no doubt get some trace of him before long.

Jane, however, insisted upon getting additional aid, and, remembering that she had seen Joe Brunton on the stairs that very morning, he having returned as suddenly as he had disappeared, ran off at once to ask him if he would help her. Jim Grimes, who was coming along with a roast of beef on a tray, and several potatoes round it, on his way to the oven, Sunday though it was, paused to inquire what was the matter with Jane; and, on hearing the story, he volunteered to join in the search too.

‘I was there for a little while myself,’ he said, ‘and I came off disgusted, for they were taking him in most hawful, and he paying up like a gentleman, too. It wasn’t any business o’ mine to interfere; but if I had known he was any friend o’ yours, my lass, I’d have stood up for him manful.’

After all, Turfy’s illness was a great blessing to Jane, for her hands were not only kept busy, but her sympathy roused, owing to the old man having to suffer much pain. Toward the afternoon, however, he was somewhat relieved, so Minnie was brought down at his request, and seated on a low stool by the side of the fire, where she sat as quiet as a mouse, nursing the cat. Jane, too, moved about quietly, preparing the poultices and fomentations, the two making as pleasant a picture as a sick man need wish to see.

‘I’ve been thinking more than once of what we talked about the first time we met,’ he said, in rather a stammering way, as if he felt ashamed to speak of it; but Jane, re-

collecting her own difficulty when speaking to Thomas, hastened to help him.

‘Oh yes, I remember,’ she said; ‘we were speaking of God’s goodness, and trusting in Him.’

‘Ay,’ said the old man slowly; ‘an’ you’re still of the same mind?’

‘Oh yes, more than ever; for He *has* upheld us, Minnie and me, and given us our daily bread, and’—

‘Ay, it’s just been daily bread, I can see that, judging by your pale, pinched face.’

‘Oh no, we have had all we want—our daily bread and more. It is safer not to get all our own way in this world, and till to-day I have been very happy; for I know and have felt that Jesus does make Himself our strength, for He indeed is in truth the Bread of Life.’

‘And what has come to-day to change it all?’ said Turfy. ‘You came down with a bright, happy smile to me this morning, and now I find you moving about with such a sad look, and tears glistening in your eyes; what is it all about, my dear? It might be a comfort to you to tell an old man like me, who has learned to keep things close, of your troubles.’

Then Jane again repeated the story of Thomas’ arrival, of his intentions, and of his disappearance, and how the three men were away in search of him, and how her heart was not only heavy and sad, but full of forebodings of evil.



## CHAPTER VIII.

ALL of a sudden, when Jane had finished her story, old Turfy sat straight up in his bed and caught hold of her hand, squeezing it so tightly that she almost cried aloud with pain. 'Surely there *is* a God after all, and He has taken the villain away in time. My dear, remain as you are, ay, even without bread, rather than marry a drunkard; he will pull himself and you down, down, down even to the bottomless pit. "No drunkard shall enter the kingdom of heaven,"—these were her last words to me; and now she is safe there, and our little child too, and I am shut out, out into the darkness.'

Jane was somewhat alarmed, and did her best to soothe him by reminding him that no one ever saw him in a public-house, and always sober; adding, 'Surely you are not speaking about yourself?'

'Yes, my dear, I am. I sent her to her grave with a broken heart—my young, pretty, kind little wife, who made my home so pleasant to me,—ay, even when I came in with the drink in



my head, and my temper up, for it always made me mad and wild. I'd never rest till I had picked a quarrel with her ; and though she tried hard to soothe me down, never saying aught to worrit me, still I'd manage it somehow. Many's the time I left the mark of my fist on her fair skin, and all for nothing. " Was I sorry after, when I came to myself ? " you ask. Of course I was sorry, but what of that ?—it was short-lived. The very first time I got bad again, it was the same story, till I do believe I hit her too hard one night, when I had been even extra bad, and she sickened and died. " Did anybody know of it ? " Not very likely, for she wouldn't have told against me for the world,—no, hot pincers wouldn't have made her say a word ; and, what's more, she wouldn't hear of a doctor being called, just in case he would find out, and I was mean enough to give in to her notion. For two or three days before she died I kept away from the grog-shops and was quite sober, I couldn't help seeing she was going to leave me then, and I was ready to promise anything to ease her mind, poor dear, about our baby boy, and so I solemnly vowed I'd never touch a drop of drink from that hour for his sake. After she was gone, I kept my promise to her for three or four months, and did do my duty by the boy ; and a fine fellow he was growing, and I was as happy as a king about him, and took such a pride and a pleasure in him as never was. But one day I happened to meet a very old friend, and he teased me to have a pipe and a single pot of

beer with him ; and so I gave in, though, being in my sober senses as I was, I might have known beforehand how it would end if I once entered a public-house,—that the craving within would not be content with a pot of beer, once the taste of it was in my mouth. When or how I found my way home I do not know, but on opening the door there was a sight to sober any man in half a moment. My boy, who was getting to be such a companion to me, and had so many pretty coaxing ways with him,—there he was, I say, drowned in the wash-tub, and scarcely above three or four inches of water in it. I seemed to hear his mother's last words of warning sounding in my ears, "A drunkard can never enter the kingdom of heaven," and for hours and days on end it kept ringing in them till I seemed to be deaf to everything else ; and I suppose I lost my reason, and as I didn't care what became of me, the neighbours fancying I'd mayhap put an end to myself, I was locked up in a ward in the Union and treated as a lunatic. When I came to myself, I gave up believing in a God at all, and to this day I can't get myself to do it ; for why should I be in the land of the living, and them two innocent dears, who never did no ill at all, be took away, and all for my fault ? Answer me if you can, lass.'

Turfy's voice was so harsh and loud, while his eyes seemed starting out of his head, that for a few minutes Jane was a little afraid he was losing his reason once more, but she answered as calmly as she could. 'I think, when God took

your young wife away, it was in love and mercy, so that she might enjoy the glorious rest prepared for those who love the Saviour. He took your baby home for the same reason, and left you here that you might have time to repent, that in the end you may be with them in their heavenly home.'

'If I could only think that that is true,' said Turfy, drawing the sleeve of his shirt across his weary eyes, 'there wouldn't be a happier man in all London. But no, it could not be; for, if there is a God, He could have nothing to do with me after the way I've spoken of Him and gone against Him, and acted altogether for years on end.'

'Yes, I know it is a dreadful thought when we come to look all our sins in the face,' said Jane; 'but then no one need despair, not even the chief of sinners, for Christ came down to this earth and took upon Himself the likeness of man, yet without sin, and suffered and died that we might be saved. Not very long ago Mr. Frazer was saying how hard it was for many people to believe all this; that they would not lay their burden of sin down at the feet of Jesus, but hugged it close to them, taking in their pride a sort of pleasure in supposing that their sin was too much for Christ to forgive, and saying, "Oh, I cannot come with all this burden of guilt into such a holy presence," instead of stretching out their hands towards Him with the cry, "Lord, save me or I perish." Mr. Frazer reminded us of Paul the persecutor and blasphemer, how he was converted; and of Christ's own words about

the man with the hundred sheep, and how he left the ninety and nine and went after the one that was lost, and how he rejoiced over it when it was found, meaning that He did the same when even one poor sinner repented and turned to Him.'

Jane had brought her Bible, and now read many comforting passages to him. At first he fidgeted about a good deal, but by and by he lay and listened quietly, till at last a calmer look came over his troubled countenance than Jane had ever seen there before. Poor little Minnie had been sitting as quiet as possible for hours, but she now scrambled up on to Jane's knee, saying as she did so, 'Sing a sweet pretty hymn to Minnie; Minnie's head 'll be better if 'oo sing "I'se a pilgrim an' a stranger."'

By the time the hymn was sung to the end, little Minnie was fast asleep; but Jane's plaintive voice had awakened some long-forgotten memory in the old man's mind, and he lay with the tears slowly trickling down his cheeks. 'It seems,' he said, 'as if I was a child once more, sitting by my mother's knee and listening to her singing. Oh, these were happy days then! I used to like to go to church then and join in the prayers with her and father, and afterwards with my wife when we were first married, till the drink got the better of me. Speak of slavery! What greater slavery can there be than one who has given himself up to the power of the demon drink? That is a yoke that only the power of the Highest can break. Oh, the accursed drink!—but for it she

might have been with me still, and so might our baby. My girl, take the advice of one who knows what a hold it gets of you, and never marry a man who drinks. Steer clear of him, I say; for see what it has brought me to, beyond hope of forgiveness in this world and in the next to come.'

'No, no, no. You must not say that, dear,' said Jane softly. 'Listen,' and she sang a verse or two of her own favourite hymn—

'Art thou weary, heavy laden?  
 Art thou sore distrest?  
 Come to me, "saith One," and coming  
 Be at rest.

. . . . .

'If I ask Him to receive me,  
 Will He say me nay?  
 Not till earth and not till heaven  
 Pass away.'

In a few minutes after, Turfy fell asleep, and, calling the little boy who was enjoying the warmth and comfort of a bed beside Clover in the shed adjoining, she carried Minnie up-stairs to bed. There was still no word of Thomas Harris, but neither Samuel Brown nor the other men had come home; and though Mrs. Brown was beginning to feel somewhat anxious as to the safety of her own husband, she very kindly kept her fears to herself as to the tricks and quirks of that class of men called crimps, who, for all any one knew, had perhaps drugged Samuel and his companions, and who would

get them shipped off in the first outward-bound ship as a portion of the crew. It was impossible for either of the women to sleep, so Mrs. Brown came into Jane's room after the children had all been disposed of, and sat talking quietly together ever so far on into the night. Just when the daylight was beginning to dawn, a footstep was heard coming up the stairs, which proved to be Samuel Brown. He came to say Thomas Harris had at last been found, and would be along in the morning with Joe and Jim. 'We've had a hard time of it to get at him,' he said, 'but it's all right now, so you just get off to bed, both of you, and have an hour's sleep while I go and fetch the fish from the market.'

It was well on in the forenoon, however, before Thomas made his appearance, and so changed was he that Jane for a moment did not recognise him. He had been well dressed in sailor's clothes when he paid his first visit, and had walked with a free bold step, holding up his head in a manly way; but now his clothes were replaced by a shabby suit, evidently bought from some old-clothesman, as the various garments apparently had belonged to different men; so that poor Thomas looked more like an effigy of Guy Faux than a British seaman. His face was red and swollen, and he hung his head for very shame as he entered the room. 'It's all over with me now, Jane,' he said with a sob in his throat; 'but this I will say, I didn't ever mean to get drunk, but was forced to do what I did sore against my will.'

‘That he was,’ said Samuel Brown, ‘for I seed him myself ; and if I had only known as how he was a friend of yours, I’d have stood up for him, my lass, you may depend on’t.’

‘There’s no chance of the licence, Jane, now, for the money’s all gone,’ said Thomas. ‘But what are you going to do now, my poor girl?’

‘Never mind me, Thomas,’ said Jane, her eyes filling with tears nevertheless. ‘I’m willing to believe it was all an accident this time ; but oh, Thomas, if you truly love me, promise me that from this hour you will never enter a public-house nor let a drop of drink pass over your throat. I’ve heard dear father say if you once gave your word you would stick to it, and, besides, that this was the only way for a man to do if he wanted to keep free from that terrible yoke of drink ; for that, if he did not master it, it would master him.’

‘You don’t know what you’re asking of me, Jane,’ said Thomas. ‘You may well call drink a yoke ; it’s not so easy to lay it aside once you get a taste for it. Besides, there’s many temptations in a sailor’s path to take it when he has a chance, though I must say, though I drink my grog as well as most aboard, I don’t let it master me but once in a way, so you needn’t be afraid of me on that score.’

‘No, Thomas, that will not do ; I must have your promise never to touch a drop, else it will have to be goodbye now and for evermore between us.’

‘Well, look here, my lass. I’d do a good deal for your sake,

and it grieves me to think how I might have saved you from much misery if I had never been tempted to take that pot of beer ; so, if you will promise to let bygones be bygones, and that you'll marry me the end of next trip, I'll try to keep my word to you, now given, never to drink a drop of drink till I see you again, God helping me.'

'And so He will, my friend,' said the well-known voice of Mr. Frazer, coming in at the door, which had been left standing half open. 'As you say, Jane, drink is the hardest of all taskmasters, and will get the better of us unless we keep a sharp look-out and a firm grip of ourselves. Come now, let us look into the matter, my friends, for I have heard the whole story from our friend Mrs. Grimes. Let us consider what a drunkard brings upon himself. Solomon says, "The drunkard shall come to poverty;" and St. Paul tells us that the drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of God. That is an awful warning, my friend,—poverty-stricken here in this life, and cut off from the love and favour of God in the next ! But what does the same apostle tell us to do?—to comfort the backslider, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow. There is the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother, who is willing and able to give us strength to resist the temptations of Satan, so that in the end even the arch-enemy himself has no power over us to harm us. Ah, it is so nice when we consider the twofold effect of willingness and ability to help. Our dearest friends may be willing—



just look at yourself now, my poor fellow, how gladly would you place this good girl in a comfortable home, but you are not able. Ah yes, and some friends who are able to help want the willing heart ; but Christ is able and He is willing to help to the uttermost all who truly repent and turn to Him. Are you willing to let Him help you, my friend ? ’

‘ Oh yes, sir, if I only knew how,’ said Thomas Harris very humbly. ‘ You’re College learned, sir, but I’m only a poor ignorant seaman, and haven’t much opportunity to hear aught about them good things, though I’ve got a Bible and can spell it out as well as most aboard, and perhaps better.’

‘ Ah, that is so nice. Well, now, I will tell you. You said that you would try for this young girl’s sake to keep from drink : it is a help to have such an inducement, and we are all the better of clinging to anything that will keep us in the right path ; but let me tell you, that if along with this anxiety you add prayer to God for strength, and thereby gain love to your best Friend, the battle will be an easy fought one, and the victory sure. God will never forsake you if you ask Him always to hold you up. If Satan tempts you to return to the forbidden paths, turn to your Bible ; it will point out the sunken rocks and the dangerous quicksands, for it is the best and safest chart to lead the soul safely into the most secure of all havens, eternal life.’

‘ I will indeed try to do my best, sir,’ said Thomas

earnestly. 'It made me feel so nigh-hand mad this morning, when I came to myself and found all my money gone, and the very clothes on my back carried off and replaced with these old filthy rags. I tell you, sir, I was tempted for a moment to pitch myself into the river and so end it all. But the thought of this poor girl toiling and slaving her dear heart out, that kept me from it. I ain't a pretty sight by any means, but there's something of the man left in me yet; and if she will only keep trusting in me, I'll do my best to make myself a fit companion for her, for she's come of a good stock, and a man better than me might be proud to win her.'

'That's right, my fine fellow,' said Mr. Frazer; 'and you may be sure her prayers are following you, and may God bless you and keep you from falling.'

Jane insisted that Thomas should take back the two sovereigns he had given her, and when he spoke of her drawing his pay from his employers she thanked him, but firmly refused to do that; and in this Mr. Frazer took her part, and Thomas had to leave with a heavy heart because of the long days of hard work in store for her before he could return to relieve her from it. 'Don't you be so downhearted,' said Mr. Frazer, who went at Jane's request to see him safely aboard his ship. 'Her life is certainly a very hard one, but God is now the strength of her heart; He will uphold her and feed her with food convenient for her.'





## CHAPTER IX.

WHEN Thomas Harris stepped on board his ship, it was in sailor's garb once more, thanks to the two sovereigns Jane had saved, and to the kindness of Mr. Frazer, who had insisted upon lending him enough to buy what clothes he required to make him as comfortable as possible. 'I feel I can trust you to pay it to me again,' said the good old man; 'and you know I shall have the blessing promised to the giver,' he had added with a smile, giving Thomas a kindly clap on the shoulder.

'Thank you, sir,' replied the poor fellow, the tears coming up into his eyes; 'I'll do my best to earn your good opinion, that I will. We sailors don't much like to have parsons with us afloat: we've a notion they bring us bad luck, do you see, sir, or that there's sure to be a burial service afore the voyage is ended, or some'at else that's bad may happen; but I do believe that's just some nonsense altogether, for this I know, I can't help feeling you've brought out more of the man in me, sir, than any one ever did afore.'

Even the smallest apprentice in the ship soon noticed that Black Tom, as they called him, was in great distress of mind, that something apart from what had caused his face to be bruised and discoloured was vexing him; and rough though his comrades were, they kept aloof, as if wishing to show him they respected his sorrow. But when the first two or three days of outward-bound activity were over, so as to make the vessel what was called ship-shape, and there had come a breathing-time, Thomas still continued to be dull and listless, and seemed by no means inclined to be social with any one. Most of the men then began to talk about him, though in a whisper; for those who knew him best were aware by experience that his temper was not to be trifled with, and the new men on board saw at a glance that it was safer to keep clear of such a gloomy-looking shipmate.

‘What’s up with Tom Harris, I wonder?’ said a young seaman, who had snatched a leisure moment to put a few necessary stitches into some of his clothes. ‘Bill, here, says Tom stepped aboard the boat as sober as a judge; it’s the very first time such a thing ever happened with him, I do think.’

‘Yes, it’s hard won and freely go with Tom’s pay, once he gets hold of it,’ said Jerry Bright. ‘Some of them black-guard crimps have got the better of him, and cleaned him out extra bare, perhaps,’ suggested another.

‘No, it a’n’t that, ’cause he’s got some money left in his

pocket still, for I caught sight o' some silver when he tossed a shilling to the boatman for bringing him off.'

'I have it,' said a young foretopman with a wise shake of the head; 'you recollect he told us once he was going to marry a daughter of our old shipmate, Martin, some o' these fine days. She must be a good un if she's like her father; and if she's dead, or has given Tom the slip, I don't wonder that he's down in the dolefuls a bit about it.'

'Oh! ah, perhaps some'at has happened to the poor wench,' was the general murmur, ending by a sympathetic, 'Ah, well now, I'd be sorry if this was true. He's a kind-hearted mate as ever was, is Tom, a good chum, and a true seaman; keep him away from the drink, that's all.' 'Yes,' echoed several, 'keep him away from the drink.'

At this moment Tom Harris came up the nearest hatchway, and, after looking all round, he swung himself up by some ropes, and disappeared up in the rigging. He was generally called by the name of Black Tom, and was certainly entitled to the name; for he was not only over six feet in height, but almost as swarthy in complexion as a native of one of the South Sea Islands. But it was no wonder that his shipmates shook their heads at the idea of a demon being roused in him through drink; for, if such was the case, few would care to grapple with such a powerful frame.

'I'd let him alone,' said Joe Hyson again, holding up the canvas jacket he had been repairing, to take an admiring

look at it. 'Black Tom mightn't like his appearance to be talked about in this way.'

'In what way, Joe?' said Harry Staines. 'I only said he was down in the dolefuls, and seemed likely to stick there for the whole cruise.'

'Well, Tom mightn't like it for all that, old bo'. He'll come round in time, and we'll get hold of the clue of it by and by.'

'Oh, Joe Hyson is al'ays right, in course,' said Harry with a sneer; 'pity you don't stay alongshore and turn lawyer.'

'Oh, don't let us quarrel,' said old Ben the sailmaker. 'Joe meant no harm, Harry, and he's right; Tom might be crusty if he wants to keep to hisself what he knows best about. All the same, I'd like to know and to make sure that Martin's little girl is all right. By the potograph Tom had, and that he used to show off to all hands round when in an extra good humour, she must be a sweet pretty dear.'

'Yes, some'at like her father about the mouth and chin, and the same honest look in her eyes,' said Harry Staines; 'I do hope she's all right, poor lass.'

'Hope *who* is all right?' asked Jack Dempster, coming along just in time to hear the last words.

'Poor Martin's little girl. We can't help thinking there's some trouble about her in Tom's mind, seeing as how he's so queer and gloomy looking.'

'Ay, he's got a sore heart, has Tom, and I don't wonder

at it, and neither will you when you hear the whole yarn ;' and forthwith Jack related the story which we know already, of how Tom's liberty days on shore had been spent. 'The worst of it all is she's so hard up, but she wouldn't consent to touch a shilling of his pay till she drew it lawful-like as his wife.'

'She's got her father's spirit in her, I see,' said Joe, 'and I like her for it too, I do.'

'Tom has got it into his head,' continued Jack, 'that the lass will die of starvation and overwork ; for she's but a little slip of a lass, and was never overly strong, so the thought of it is nigh-hand driving him mad, to think that if he hadn't gone into that grog-shop he'd have been able to make her comfortable. What's more, she has told him very plainly, too, that unless he gives up drinking altogether she'll rather work till she drops than marry him ; and in this notion she's been backed up by a missionary parson, who told him his mind on the matter as plain. Only Tom couldn't be angry, for the missionary was very kind, and rigged Tom out in as many things as he needed, and only took his word for it that the money would be paid if ever he came safe home.'

'All I can say is,' said Joe, 'I'm downright sorry for Martin's little lass, then ; for the drink has got a terrible hold on Tom by this time, and what's more, each time he gives up taking his grog for a few days, it seems to make him go at it harder than ever when he gets a chance.'



‘He’s putting the blame on them crimps, is he?’ said Ben the sailmaker. ‘All I can say is, Tom wouldn’t be so very hard to coax over, once a glass or two had been gulped down. He would go at it drinking like a fish, and forget all about the girl in no time.’

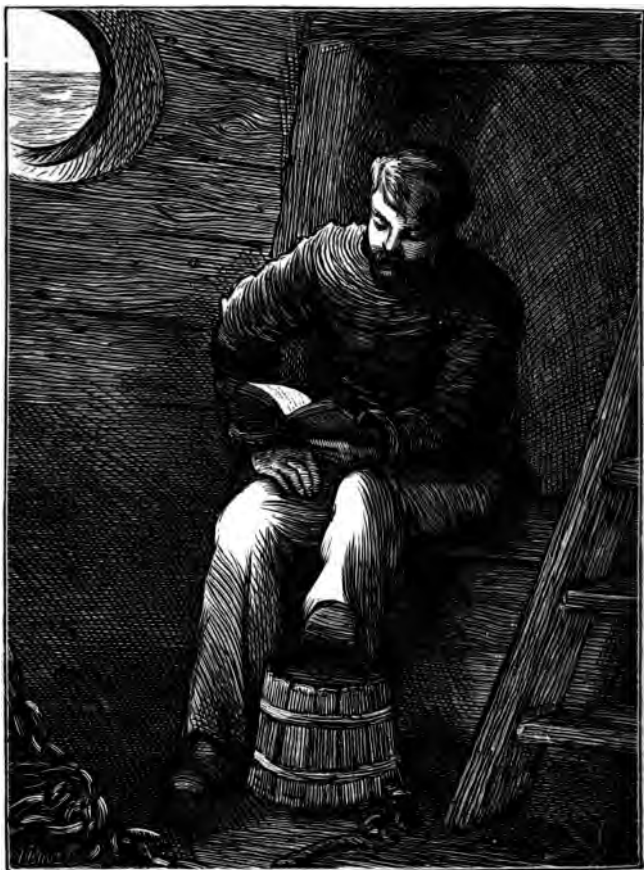
‘Well, he’s going to try hard this time, mates all,’ said Jack Dempster; ‘and what I was going to say to ye is this, let’s give him a help for the sake of poor Martin’s little lass. Martin was a mate all of us was the better for, and none ever the worse, and I do hope Tom means to stick to his promise; but if we like we can all help him.’

‘I can’t say as I know that we can, for one,’ said Harry Staines. ‘Tom is as headstrong as a pig. You don’t mean that we are to give up taking our allowance of grog afore him, or to stow him away in a snug corner against his will when we go ashore at any of the foreign ports?’

‘No,’ said Jack Dempster; ‘but what I do mean is, that none of us need take any notice of him not taking any, as we’ve done befcrc, for we all know, big as he is, he can’t stand a laugh against him. And we can do our best to keep him out of the grog-shops ashore. It would be acting like true mates to the poor fellow if we helped him against himself, and for the sake of Martin’s lass, a-toiling and a-starving her poor little self at home in London.’

‘You’re right, old bo’, and we’ll do as you advise,’ said one and all most heartily; and Ben the sailmaker added, ‘Couldn’t





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we subscribe some of our pay and send it from the first port, next opportunity? The lass belongs to us, so to speak, on her father's account; so we have a right to see after her, and it's just what he would have done for any of our youngsters if they were known to be hard up.'

It is not our intention to give a minute account of how Tom Harris managed to keep himself sober during that voyage; suffice it to say that the interest Jack Dempster had raised at the beginning of the voyage was beneficial, and, had it not been for the kindness of his shipmates, he would have sunk back again into his old ways over and over again. As he used often to say afterwards, he had no idea that the love of drink had got such a firm hold of him, or that the struggle would be half so severe to get the better of it. In those days of darkness Tom would turn to Jane's little Bible, which she had slipped into his hand at parting; reading all over again the passages she had marked for her own comfort and support. While engaged thus, Thomas Harris seemed to hear her speaking to him, and by the time he had patiently turned over all the leaves in search for more, the temptation to break his word had passed away. 'I wonder if she is praying for me at this moment of time,' he would say, rubbing his heated forehead; 'the old parson said she'd be at it early and late, and that he, too, wouldn't forget me neither.' Then he would cry out, using the same words Mr. Frazer had used when he parted with him, 'O God! keep me from falling.'

A day or two before they left Bombay on their homeward voyage once more, most of the men went ashore to spend a few liberty hours. Thomas Harris kept as much out of sight of his shipmates as possible, and so interested was he while going through the bazaar with some of the apprentices, that the time slipped past in a most pleasant manner, and he set out towards the ship feeling happier than he had done for many a day. He had several pretty things in a parcel under his arm, presents for Jane and her little friend; and as he walked along he smiled to himself as he thought of their pleased faces when the covers should be unfolded. Mean-time he was interrupted by a noisy crowd issuing from a drinking booth, amidst whom he recognised several of his shipmates. He made an attempt to slip past without attracting their attention, but was stopped by Harry Staines, who called out, 'Hallo, Tom, old bo', where have you been a-hiding of your precious self, instead o' drinking success to our homeward trip?'

'Come along and drink a drop now,' cried another, who was very glad of the excuse to get a little more. 'It ain't lucky not to drink a single drop; no shirking, man, else we'll be thinking we've got another Jonah aboard.'

'And gloomy enough he do look at times, does Tom, to make us think he's one already.'

It was in vain for Tom to protest; he was seized and carried off by two or three, and forced to sit down, while a large glass

of rum or arrack, a coarse and fiery kind of liquor, was set before him. The smell of it seemed to rouse the demon of desire in him once more; he felt like a man who has been suffering from thirst for days; his lips seemed to become parched, and his eyes started in their sockets. He raised the full tumbler as if to put it to his hot lips, but at that moment Jane's face seemed to come between it and him, and her voice to sound in his ears, 'Tom, Tom, for my sake, if not for your own, ask God to help you.'

'O God, have mercy on me!' called Tom aloud, letting the tumbler fall out of his hand. The next moment a faintness came over him, and he sank senseless on the ground. The sight of their prostrate shipmate seemed to sober some of the men, and they lifted him up gently and carried him out to the air, where he soon came to himself. 'Come along, mate,' said Jerry Bright, pushing a younger man aside; 'let's get you aboard to your bunk. You've been walking about in the heat, and it's upset you; a good sleep will do you all the good in the world.'

Tom took the offered arm willingly, feeling thankful to feel himself at last in the boat and on his way to the ship in the harbour. Seeing his white look, Jerry drew out a pocket flask full of rum, and held it towards him; but Tom pushed it aside with a shudder of disgust. At that, the colour rushed into his pale face, and he had difficulty to keep from shouting out aloud, in his satisfaction to find that in place

of the temptation to drink, there had come a strange feeling of loathing at it. He had read in Jane's Bible that very morning: 'He who ruleth his spirit is greater than he who taketh a city,' and he felt he could not only hold up his head like a free man, but meet Jane without a shadow of a fear, for the yoke that had bound him so long was indeed broken. 'It was He who helped me without a doubt. The old gentleman said if I kept on asking Him, calling on Him in the day of trouble, He would answer me, and He has.'

When he found himself safely on board the ship, he inwardly determined never to go on shore again till he reached England. 'It's best to keep out of the way of temptation,' he said; 'and as my old mother used to say, "The Lord helps them who help themselves."'





## CHAPTER X.

BUT now we must see what Jane Martin has been doing all this time. After Thomas Harris had sailed, she set herself to the old work of whelk-boiling and eel-stewing for honest Mrs. Brown, with as cheerful a heart as she could command. Apart from her own necessity, she was anxious to show her gratitude to her neighbours in every way in her power, and worked twice as hard as she had done before. The season of shell-fish was now closing, but the Browns had managed to save as much money as would pay the rent of a small shed, which they had fitted up as a fruit and vegetable stall; and, as it was under cover, Jane was at last prevailed upon to take charge of it, while Samuel Brown and his wife supplied their various customers in the different streets and alleys round about. Though Jane shrank from the rude remarks and jests of many of the customers, she was thankful that she had the employment; for more than once she had seen wan figures shrinking past, young women about her own age, who



were evidently out of work, and whose pale faces made her remember her own days of suffering and hunger. On one occasion a young lady—for Jane saw she was that at one glance, in spite of her threadbare clothing—entreated her to let her sit down for only a few minutes, as she felt sick and faint with hunger and fatigue, and was at a loss to know what to do; ill-mannered men looked into her face and frightened her with their coarse remarks, and the police kept telling her to move on if she stood but for a few minutes. ‘Move on,’ she said with a bitter laugh; ‘move on, they say, but where to? They won’t even let one end it all in the Thames, but force you to live on when life is past endurance.’ Jane’s kindly words of sympathy drew from her, that she was the daughter of a clergyman; that after his death she had rashly come up to London, without full preparation beforehand, to try to gain her living by teaching; that the only friend she had there, and whom she expected to have helped her, had gone abroad, no one knew exactly where; and that, while waiting for employment, she had been forced to dispose of her spare clothes, only making matters worse: for now the only suit left was so worn and dusty that it made people look suspiciously at her, and she could produce no character from previous employers. ‘I should be thankful if I had even a place like this to keep,’ she added, looking upon the poor little shed enviously, and with a weary sigh; ‘it feels like a haven of refuge after being pushed and jostled in the noisy streets.’

All this and much more of her little history Jane heard then and after, when the day's work was over ; for, on hearing that the landlady of the house where she had been staying had turned her out, Jane invited her to share her little garret, where she might stay till the letter she was expecting from friends in the country should arrive, with the money necessary to take her home. This little episode added greatly to Jane's thankfulness, for she could not but see that, badly off though she was herself, there were hundreds—nay, thousands—in a worse condition.

It was good Mrs. Trigg who vexed herself most about Jane ; for, now that the worthy woman was able to be about again, she had arrived at the shed to find two half-tipsy men annoying the girl about the purchase of some fruit, and she was determined that some more suitable kind of work must be got for her somehow. 'If it wasn't for Trigg's cantankerous temper, I'd take you home with me and share my washing and ironing ; but it mightn't be pleasant for you if he objected, do you see, my dear ?' said the good, kind woman.

As for Minnie, old Turfy had insisted upon taking charge of her during the day ; and delightful rides she had in the little donkey-cart away out into the suburbs, or to what Minnie called the country, bringing back with her handfuls of sweet daisies and clover, to the great delight of the little Browns. Matters were thus progressing with Jane Martin and the Browns, when one of the younger children took

measles, giving Mrs. Brown something to fret about, as Samuel said ; for she had never been done hinting that their present state of prosperity would not and could not last long—that it was far too good to be true. Old Turfy then proposed that Minnie had better sleep in his house ; and to this kindly offer Jane willingly agreed, as the child was very delicate, and had never had the measles. She recollected poor Mrs. Semple saying she dreaded Minnie taking any illness, for she was always so very ill when many a child would take it mildly.

It was the opinion of more than one that old Turfy considered himself a gainer by thus getting ‘ the pretty little dear to his own self.’ That Minnie’s presence made the old man’s life happier, there could be no doubt whatever ; for the usual gloomy look was fast disappearing from his face, and, in his anxiety to make the little girl happy, his silent tongue became a most talkative one. There were all sorts of rumours in the court, that Turfy had not only been heard laughing, but singing, and singing, too, ‘ most splendid,’ in spite of his voice having something of a harsh croak in it—he that was thought by many a one to be next door to dumb. Mr. Frazer thought it certainly was one of the prettiest sights imaginable to see the old man sitting in his comfortable chair, resting after the day’s labour was over, with little Minnie on her stool opposite to him, nursing the cat, and at the same time attempting to hem a large spotted pocket-handkerchief for her old Daddy, as she now called the old man.

The worthy missionary had not been in the court since Thomas Harris left, but he had heard about Jane from Mrs. Trigg, and had just now come at her request to see if something better could be got for the girl to do, more especially as the child seemed to be so well provided for.

'She's just as fresh as the prettiest posy that ever bloomed, and as good as gold, too,' said the old man, in answer to some words of Mr. Frazer's about her. 'But, sir,' he added eagerly, apparently in jealous fear lest the missionary had any intention of removing her, 'she's as happy as a queen, she is; and when she's out in the cart, she's wrapped up so that no cold can come nigh her. I do believe there's the least bit of colour coming into her pale cheeks, and, though she frets a bit for Jane still, specially when night comes, she's getting used to it more now.'

'Jane is coming back to Minnie edy, edy soon, Misser Frazer,' she said, turning an appealing look to the good missionary. 'The pretty angels wif the wings ain't going to take her away to muvver yet?'

'No, my dear,' said Mr. Frazer, lifting the child on to his knee. 'Jane is helping Mrs. Brown, so that she may stay and nurse little Polly, who is very sick; and Jane must keep away from Minnie till Polly is better, in case Minnie turns sick too. But Minnie will be a good little girl, and wait patiently, won't she?'

'Oh, she's a good little dear now,' said Turfy. 'I couldn't

believe a child could be half so sweet as she is ; she is just like a ray of sunshine in a dark place.'

' Ah yes, my friend, the society of children is very precious. I often wonder how many people like to have so little of it, banishing them to the top of the house into nurseries, or anywhere, so as to have as little trouble with them as possible. He knew better who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven!"'

' And that's what I'm in mortal terror of sometimes, sir,' said Turfy in a mysterious whisper, and with a side nod across at Minnie. 'She do sit and talk so about heaven and the angels, till I keep thinking she'll spread her own little wings and flee away out of my sight for evermore.'

' But why should that distress you, my friend?' said Mr Frazer.

' 'Cause, sir, I'm a poor wicked sinner, and don't ever expect to be able to follow after her.'

"Except ye become as one of these little children," my friend, "ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." These are some more of His words to show us how we must lean on Him, and trust Him as the weakest infant does its mother. What is it, my good friend—feeling as you do that you are a sinner—that keeps you away from a gracious Saviour?'

' Well, sir, you see, I long had my doubts about there being a God at all, sir ; but Jane Martin somehow drove the

unbelief out of me so far. But now I can't take in this new notion of a Saviour, for I can't make it out that He, the Son of God, could come down out of heaven itself to save the like of me. If He was only in this world now, that I might hear it from Himself, it would mayhap be different.'

'And many a one has felt the same,' said Mr. Frazer. 'Ah! it is a wonderful thing the love of God: it passeth all man's understanding! Yet, nevertheless, my friend, there it is, praised be His name, for you and for me to lay hold of, as surely as the erring Israelites laid hold of the horns of the altar when they fled for refuge, or turned their eyes to the brazen serpent in the wilderness and they were cured. But, my friend, though we have our Bible, and the power of reading for ourselves the whole grand but simple story of redeeming love, it will be as a strange language to us, or as a sealed book, unless we ask for God's grace to enable us to understand it. Jesus told His disciples it was expedient for Him to suffer and to go away, but that He would send the Comforter to them and to us, which is the Holy Ghost.'

'But, sir, what am I to do?' said Turfy, his voice becoming husky and low, showing how intensely interested he was. 'I've tried to take it in, but I cannot.'

'Ah, my friend, take courage,' said Mr. Frazer. 'The moment I hear a man put a straightforward question like that, my heart gives a great leap, for I feel sure the Spirit

of God is working in him already ; and so I say to you, my friend, pray earnestly to God to give you of His Holy Spirit. He may not quicken you into newness of life all in a moment, but you must still watch and pray, and keep on trusting in His gracious promise. *Do* have faith—believing that in His own good time and pleasure He will answer you.’

‘ Oh, sir,’ said old Turfy, ‘ it would only be right if I was kept waiting for months and years, after all I’ve said and done against Him. After Jane Martin said she thought I’d mayhap been left here to give me time to repent, and that if I would only turn from my wickedness and believe in God there was hope for me yet that I’d meet my poor wife and my own little child some day in heaven,—ever since that I’ve longed so to try ; but them doubts and fears rise up within me, and I can’t take it in, somehow. I’ve been going to ask her more, many a time, but she has had such a busy life, and now more than ever ; so I’ve made so bold as to speak my mind to you, sir.’

‘ I’m very glad you have,’ said Mr. Frazer earnestly. ‘ Meanwhile, my friend, pray to God, and He’ll do abundantly for you above all that you can ask or think.’

It was plainly to be seen that Mr. Frazer did not speak in his usual energetic tone—indeed, once or twice Turfy thought his visitor was going to fall asleep, so worn out did he look. He explained, as he rose to go, that he had had a long round, and rather a fatiguing day of it ; but

that he was anxious to see Jane, as the worthy Mrs. Trigg was fretting somewhat about the girl, and that he was on his way to the little stall now, where Mrs. Brown had told him Jane was sure to be found.

‘I’m sure, sir, it’s very kind of you to take such an interest in us poor folks as you do, and you looking ready to drop with weariedness. If Clover had only been a pony, now, you’d mayhap have accepted a ride on his back to help you on a bit.’

Mr. Frazer thanked the old man for his kind wish, but said he would try to get a ’bus part of the way home; adding, with a smile, that ‘the boys and little Minnie were very glad Clover was not a pony, but the well-behaved donkey he was.’

‘Well, sir, they’d miss him greatly, I make no doubt of it myself,’ said Turfy with a pleased expression. ‘A pony may be a finer-looking beast; but a donkey, though he’s called stupid, has twice as much wisdom in him. You’ll perhaps not believe it, but many’s the time, when I had made up my mind I had found a first-rate piece of turf, Clover would give a disdainful toss of his head, like, and march on to a different side; and sure enough, wherever he stopped, the turf was prime. But I’m keeping you on your feet, sir, and you as tired as can be.’

‘Oh, I like to hear about Clover,’ said Mr. Frazer heartily. ‘I quite believe what you say, for I had a donkey once myself when I was quite a child, and I do believe the bitterest



tears I ever shed all my life were shed for him when he died. I'd have liked to have heard more, but I must go; and it is not likely I shall be back this way again, for I leave for Scotland in a few days.'

'Oh, sir, but I'm sorry to hear it,' said Turfy, taking off his old cap, which he had just placed on his head preparatory to showing his visitor out. 'You've been a comfort and a blessing to Jane Martin, sir, and to many, many more, they do say; but you must be glad to get away from it all, sir, to your own quiet country home.'

'I won't say no to that, my good friend,' said Mr. Frazer with a smile, holding out his hand to the old man. 'I've enjoyed my stay in London very much indeed; but the doctors say I must get back to my own native air again, that a sniff of the sweet heather will do more for me than all the tonics they have been forcing me to swallow. But let me say, that if we never meet again in this world, let us hope and trust we shall meet ere long in a far serener clime. Oh yes, my good friend:

"A few more struggles here,  
A few more partings o'er,  
A few more toils, a few more tears,  
And we shall weep no more.

"'Tis but a little while,  
And He shall come again,  
Who died that we might live, who lived  
That we with Him may reign.

"Then, O my Lord, prepare  
Our souls for that glad day ;  
Oh, wash us in Thy precious blood,  
And take our sins away."

And listen to this verse, which I will leave with you on this  
little fly-leaf. Ah ! it is so nice :

"And oh ! when we have safely passed  
Through every conflict but the last ;  
Still, Lord, unchanging, watch beside  
My dying bed : for Thou hast died !  
Then point to realms of cloudless day,  
And wipe the latest tear away."







## CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Mr. Frazer arrived at the little shed under Jane's charge, he found the doorway blocked up by a young man—a gentleman, judging by his dress and appearance. In spite of Jane's earnest entreaties that he would go away, he stood, evidently enjoying the girl's distress. It was just as well that Mr. Frazer had not heard what he was saying to the poor girl, but he guessed pretty shrewdly by her blushing face and tearful eyes how much she was suffering. Taking the young man by the collar of his coat, Mr. Frazer suddenly twisted him round into the middle of the street, with a stern 'Begone, sir! Have you no pity in your heart? Life is hard enough for her without you making it intolerable.'

For a moment the young man felt inclined to retaliate, but one glance at Mr. Frazer's broad chest and long swinging arms seemed to make him think better of it; and he slunk away along the street, his walk increasing to a run, to escape from the gathering crowd of boys, who were following with derisive shouts and handfuls of mud.

Mr. Frazer sat down upon a box and looked at Jane with a curious expression ; then he shook his head slowly as he said, 'This life for you won't do, my dear. You are not like the common costermongers' daughters, and that fellow has found it out, and so will many more. A girl brought up to it would have heard him without a blush, and perhaps have given him back his words. But you couldn't do it, Jane ; no, thank God, you couldn't do it.'

'Oh no, sir,' said the poor girl ; 'it's dreadful to think that men, gentlemen too, can say such things to a poor girl who is striving hard to gain her daily bread honestly. How am I ever to endure it ! I try to shut my ears against his words, by praying to God to keep me from the evil of the world, but somehow they seem to be burning themselves into my very brain. Oh, sir, what am I to do to escape from it ?'

Mr. Frazer sat musingly tapping his stick against his foot for a few minutes, then he looked up with a bright smile to say, 'Ah, I have thought of a plan. I must carry you and the child off with us to Scotland. I shan't be able to offer you more than porridge and milk, and oatmeal cakes and scones ; but it's good and wholesome fare, though plain.'

'Oh, sir, how shall I ever thank you enough !' said Jane, clasping her hands together in an ecstasy of delight, her breast heaving with suppressed sobs, showing more than a whole volume of words what she had endured, and what her life had been.

‘We will find plenty of work for you there. I make no doubt, Jane, my sister will trot round to all her friends and get you sewing and knitting to do ; and old Alison M’Farlane, our servant, will make a notable housewife of you before long. Ah—that’s to say,’ hesitated Mr. Frazer, ‘Alison is apt to be a little stern in manner to strangers ; but she’s got a good kind heart for all that, and will take to you by and by, my dear.’

Mr. Frazer said he must now hurry home to consult with his sister about this new arrangement, as there was little or no time to be lost ; and Jane was left in the tumble-down shed alone with her happy thoughts. Apart from getting away from London, she would not now be forced to say good-bye to Mr. Frazer. That very morning she had received a letter, written by the rector of the village where Minnie’s grandmother had lived, stating that the old woman was dead, but that if the child were sent to him he would use his influence to have her placed in a charity school that was newly opened in the district. Jane had been terribly at a loss what she ought to do, thinking one minute that Minnie would be safer away from London ; for if anything happened to Jane herself, and life was so uncertain, what might not the little girl have to suffer !—and yet she could not bear the idea of giving her up. She had prayed earnestly for guidance, and now her path was made plain before her feet.

The next morning, just when Jane had got all the vegetables arranged,—for she did her best to make the small

quantity of stock as attractive-looking as possible,—she was startled by seeing a little old lady looking in at her from the doorway. By the strong resemblance she bore to the good missionary, Jane felt certain this must be Miss Frazer, and she dropped a respectful curtsy, while her face and neck crimsoned with delight.

‘Ah! what a tell-tale face,’ said the old lady, holding up her finger and shaking it, but with a kindly smile. ‘Andrew is right; such blushes are only for the shade, my dear,’ she continued. ‘I am Miss Frazer, and I am come to tell you it is all settled that you are to go north with us. I was at first a little uncertain on old Alison’s account; for my brother is not always wise in his selection of protegees, and the last turned out— Ah, well, never mind. Now that I have seen you, it is as my brother expected. I feel sure Ailie will receive you kindly.’ Notwithstanding the black silk dress and white crape shawl she wore, Miss Frazer insisted upon sitting down upon the box, the only seat in the place, to have a friendly talk with Jane, that she might find out as much about her as possible before the letter was sent off to old Alison. At her odd moments Jane worked busily with her needle. She had just finished a pair of stockings for Minnie, and was now making a pinafore for her, the sewing of which was so neatly done that Miss Frazer saw she was a good seamstress. ‘All right, my dear,’ said the good lady; ‘Ailie will be quite pleased, I make no doubt.’

There were only three days to get ready ; but both Jane's wardrobe and Minnie's were easily packed. Still she was anxious to have their clothes clean and thoroughly mended, for she could not help seeing that both Mr. Frazer and his sister stood somewhat in awe of their old servant. Mrs. Trigg's delight was only exceeded by the old man Turfy's distress ; and though he quite agreed that it was better for the child to be out of London and with such good kind friends, he could not help showing that the loss to him was almost more than he could bear.

On the last evening but one before they were to leave, he came up to Jane's room, carrying a parcel with him, which he put into her hand, saying, 'It's a nice shawl for yourself, my dear, and a few spare shillings I've got no use for ; I'd like if you would buy the little dear a nice warm cloak and hat. They tell me the hills are always covered with snow where she is going, and she's a frailish bit of a thing, and shivers so when the wind do blow on her.'

Jane thanked him for all his kindness to the child, while he waved his hand to her impatiently ; but when she said she would write to him very often, he grasped her hand and shook it, saying eagerly, 'Oh, if you would, my dear, it would be a real pleasure to me ; I'd like to hear about her and her pretty sayings. I'd give a pound, I would, to see her eyes when she looks around upon the real country and sees the flowers all a-growing and a-blowing, the pretty butterflies a-chasing of



one another in the bright sunshine, and the birds flitting about and chirping out their little songs, as I have seen 'em many and many a time.'

Mrs. Trigg was at the station to see the little party off, and so was Samuel Brown and Joe Brunton, who had insisted upon carrying Jane's modest box. At first the old man Turfy had intended to go too, but had drawn back at the last, his feelings having got the better of him. 'It will just be all darkness together with me now,' he said in a husky voice. 'Not that I ought to fret when I know it's all for the little dear's good and yours, my lass; but oh, the flesh is weak, and I am not the man I once was.'

'But there's light beyond, mind that; there's a glorious light beyond the darkness,' said Jane, pressing upon his acceptance a little book, bearing that title—a book that had been given to her by a lady, and that had helped to cheer many a weary hour.

And now the last good-bye and God bless you was said, and the train moved off, good Mrs. Trigg waving her handkerchief to it even after it was out of sight, while the tears rolled unheeded down her weather-beaten and deeply-furrowed cheeks. Minnie was wrapped in a warm travelling rug and laid upon the seat, and was soon fast asleep. She had wept bitterly at parting with her kind old friend, and Clover and the cat, when she found that they were all to be left behind, and even now in her sleep she sobbed as if she

were still thinking of the parting. But early next morning she awoke, and was lifted on to Mr. Frazer's knee, that she might see the panorama as they moved swiftly along. She quite forgot all about poor old Daddy and Clover, for the sight of the sheep in the parks and scattered over the moorlands, and the horses kicking up their heels and flying off from the noise of the engine, quite drove them out of her recollection for the time being.

The morning star was still visible, though paling and going out like a lamp before the brightness of day, and Minnie pointed up to it with her little finger. 'Look there, Mister Frazer. Muvver's face looks down upon her own 'ittle Minnie out of the stars; it's only a eddy little fink, you know, but God won't be angry with Minnie if it's not a bad fink.'

'No, no, dear,' said Mr. Frazer with a reassuring smile; 'at any rate, God, your heavenly Father, is watching over you, though you cannot see His face.'

'Minnie used to watch the stars looking down through the skylight window,' Jane explained, 'and it seemed to please and comfort her to think her mother's face was there.'

'But it was just a little fink,' said Minnie again; 'for muvver is away up in heaven, high, high up above the dear 'ittle shining stars.'

It was a long journey to Mr. Frazer's home, but Jane felt no fatigue; her heart was so full of thankfulness that it

seemed quite short to her, and she wished it could have been as long again. Miss Frazer kept pointing out the familiar places as the train drew near to the little station, which was also a terminus. There a figure was plainly seen standing on the platform, the sight of which caused the good lady to become quite excited. 'It's Alison herself,' she said. 'Well, it is good of her to come herself, instead of sending Alick.'

'It's passing strange how she has made up her mind to leave the house to take care of itself,' said Mr. Frazer; then turning to Jane, he added, 'Mrs. Alison fancies a special Providence watches over the house on Sabbaths when all the inmates are out, but she has no belief in a house being left on a week day.'

The mystery was soon solved, however; for when the train stopped, Alison M'Farlane stood by the carriage door, and before permitting even her master to alight, she inquired in a hard stern voice if the visitors that had been written about were guaranteed as to respectability.

'Hush, hush, Alison!' said Mr. Frazer. 'It is all right. Take the child out and set her down carefully, or rather keep her in your arms: she's a fragile plant.'

'Well, an' it's no to be wondered at if I'm a wee thing careful,' said the worthy woman. 'You're as dull as the dog Pepper is sharp, Mr. Andrew, at finding out a scamp, and as for Miss Annie there, she's twice as bad. It makes

me wild when I think of your honest father's watch being stolen by such an a'—

'Hush, Alison M'Farlane!' said Mr. Frazer in a sterner tone than was usual, judging by the way she stared. 'Lift out the child at once.'

Alison took Minnie in her arms; but, as she never looked at the child, she did not notice the little rosebud of a mouth pursed up in readiness for the expected kiss, till Miss Frazer said, 'Look, Ailie, at the sweet wee facey. English bairns expect to be kissed.'

'Have 'oo got any bad finks in here?' said Minnie, tapping Alison on the chest. 'When old Daddy's bad, and naughty finks come, Minnie sings a pretty hymn. Will Minnie sing to 'oo? or will Jane tell about the pretty angels wif the wings?'

Mr. Frazer laughed heartily at Alison's astonished, 'Pity me, what a droll bairn!' 'Ah, take care, Alison,' he said; 'be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.'

Alison muttered something about some folk's patience being sorely tried; but Miss Frazer, after introducing Jane to her, began to ask her so many questions about the house, and how she and all the people had got on during their long absence, that the worthy woman seemed to forget for a time all about Jane Martin and little Minnie, till they drew near the manse, and Miss Frazer asked if the little back room was

in readiness. 'You needn't be afraid of Jane Martin, Alison,' said Miss Frazer; 'she's a good Christian girl; she has come through much trouble, and you will find her a willing worker, and one who appreciates kindness. Oh, Ailie, Ailie, if you only saw some of the hovels and dens that girls are forced to live in in London, struggling on, too, to make their daily bread, and very often not succeeding, you wouldn't grudge to let them have house-room and a breath of our sweet mountain air for a few weeks.'

'I'm no grudging them anything o' the kind, mem,' said Alison in rather a sulky tone. 'You ken as weel as I do how easy the master is deceived; and, after sheltering that wild woman who stole the watch and my nice little shawl, it's natural that I should be suspicious. But if it's yours and the master's pleasure to fill your house with gangrel bodies and tramps, it's no for me to say no to it. I'm no the mistress, but just a servant, a-weel-a-wat.'

It was some days before Alison's grim, suspicious look gave place to those of composure and confidence; but Jane's quiet, unobtrusive ways and her willing helpfulness at last began to have some effect. Little Minnie's unbounded delight at sight of the flowers in the garden, the poultry in the court, the cows being milked, and all the novel sights so unusual to a town child, made her smile and laugh in spite of herself. From the first, Pepper, the house dog, had taken to the strangers in the most marked manner,—indeed, was a

devoted attendant upon little Minnie,—a circumstance that went far to chase away the last remnant of doubt in Alison's mind as to the respectability of the girls; for Alison had a belief in the instinct of the dog.

One day Mr. Frazer came into the little parlour where his sister and Jane were busy sewing, his face wearing a bright, happy smile. 'Ah, it is so nice!' he said. 'I came upon Alison M'Farlane taking great pains to show little Minnie a bird's nest. It was a treat to see her face. Poor Ailie, poor Ailie! Trouble and trial have only soured her temper for the present, apparently; but it will be all right with her in the Lord's good time. May God grant that poor Ailie may yet sing:

"Higher than the highest heavens,  
Deeper than the deepest sea,  
Lord, Thy love at last has conquered,  
None of self, and all for Thee!"



1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".



## CHAPTER XII.

A WEEK OR TWO after Jane's arrival in Scotland, poor little Minnie fell ill, a circumstance that not only brought Alison M'Farlane round to a more genial frame of mind towards them, but caused her to look upon the new inmates of the manse with much affection. Minnie's illness was at once pronounced by the doctor to be measles, and a very severe case indeed ; and as Alison was a noted nurse, she at once devoted herself to the little patient. At first Minnie clung to Jane, but very soon the little hands were stretched out to Ailie ; for it was in her strong arms she felt she lay easiest, and the good woman never seemed to be tired walking about the room with her, or rocking her gently as she lay on her lap. The soft lullabies she sang to the child seemed to have a soothing effect upon herself, for the stern features would relax, a soft light would come into her grey eyes, and a tender expression round her usually firm lips. Ah, yes ! Mr. Frazer was right ; Ailie had a kind heart in her breast though she tried to make



people think there was no softness about her. Only her master and mistress knew old Ailie's humble history. She had entered their father's house when she was fourteen, as nursemaid to the two children, and had left it at eighteen to be married. The man who had won her affections seemed to be suitable in every way. He had come a stranger to the village, and although he never cared to be questioned about his former life, no one suspected there was anything wrong. He was a steady workman,—‘the best,’ old John Wilson the carpenter said, ‘he had ever had in his workshop,—a regular attender at church, and—except when at the manse on the evenings, where he was allowed to visit Ailie—was always at home, ‘poring over his books,’ his landlady said, till all the hours in the night. He was a studious and a douce man in her opinion, and one who gave little or no trouble. So, all speaking well of him, Ailie was dressed as a bride on the appointed morning by her young mistress, Miss Annie, who was to be bridesmaid, and who seemed to be more excited about the ceremony than Ailie was herself. Ailie slipped away into her room to ask God's blessing, and pray that she might be helped to be a good wife to Alick Forrest; where she was found by her kind mistress, who did not fail to notice the glad, happy look in Ailie's eyes, though there were tears there too. They were married in the manse dining-room, Alick Forrest answering the minister's questions with a steady voice and a calm look, though his face was

deathly pale. After lunch the newly-married pair were driven to the station in the minister's double-seated gig, with Miss Annie and Master Andrew in attendance to give their good kind nurse and playmate 'a Scotch convoy.' Scarcely had they stepped out of the conveyance, however, when two policemen came forward, and, tapping Alick Forrest on the shoulder, asked him to look into the waiting-room, where he would see a friend of his. He stepped in as desired, not apparently apprehending any danger, followed too by Ailie, till she caught a glimpse of a woman and two young children, who immediately rushed forward, calling out, 'Father, father, here's mother come for you.'

How Ailie got back to the manse she never could remember; but this she knew, that Miss Annie's arms were clasped about her neck, and that every time she was forced to give vent to her feelings in a pitiful 'Oh, wae's me,' Master Andrew patted and stroked her hands, telling her never to mind; that she would just stay with them always—all the days of her life; and that when he grew to be a man he would work for her.

Alick Forrest was tried for bigamy, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and Ailie knew no more about him; but though all the inmates of the manse did their best to cheer her, she became a stern, hard woman, her life seeming to have been blighted. All the affection she had left, was shown towards Master Andrew and Miss Annie; and when their father died, and their mother in a few months after him, and reverses

of fortune came upon them, it was Ailie's savings that enabled her young master to finish his course at College, and Miss Annie to perfect herself as a teacher—indeed, from that time Ailie's face seemed to wear a brighter look than it had done for years, showing that she had experienced to the full the blessing that is promised to the willing giver.

As Ailie sat looking into little Minnie's sleeping face one evening with this softened expression, Miss Frazer, who had been sitting watching her, said, 'O Ailie, Ailie, it puts me in mind of the old, old days, when Andrew and I were wee bairns, and you were so kind and gentle to us if we were ill !'

'Folk canna wear a canty face when their hearts are wae,' was the reply. 'You ken fine, Miss Annie, what made me a changed woman. It was darkness, dreary darkness, a' round about me after that.'

'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth,' said Miss Frazer gently, and with a perceptible quiver in her voice.

'Oh, ay, Miss Annie,' said Ailie with a weary sigh ; 'nae doot, nae doot, but it's no easy for the like o' me to kiss the rod. I canna help rebelling at times when I get a glimpse into some of the houses, and see the cheery firesides, and the bairns playing about ; then bad thoughts come into my mind, and I say, "What for should I have been singled out to be tried and disgraced ?" It was a worse trial than death, I tell you. When I hear of a woman being left a widow, I

canna help thinking to myself, "Oh, if her lot had been but mine!"

'Poor Ailie, poor Ailie!' said Miss Frazer. But Minnie, stirring in her sleep, gave Alison an opportunity to escape from the subject—a subject she rarely talked about, and never with any one but her mistress.

All this time Jane was busily employed helping her kind benefactress in every way in her power. Miss Frazer had managed to get some work for her to do, and she was up and sewing at it with the earliest streak of dawn, so that she might have many spare hours to help Ailie with her duties, assist Miss Frazer with her winter work for the poor, and accompany Mr. Frazer in his visits among the poor of his flock, reading the Bible to those who were sick, saying a few kind words to the bereaved and sorrowing, or helping an over-tasked mother with some extra labour.

'Well, I *will* say,' said Alison M'Farlane one day to her mistress, '*that* Jane is as industrious a cratur as need be; she puts mony o' our Scotch lassies here to the blush. I never thought there could be as much in ane English-born as is in her;' which was as high a compliment as Ailie could have paid, the fact being well known she had a strong antipathy to any person or anything English.

In the midst of her busy and useful life, Jane did not forget Thomas Harris. There was a thrifty if modest providing being prepared against his return; for Jane's heart had been

greatly cheered lately by one or two letters that had reached her from foreign ports, the contents of which showed, as Mr. Frazer said, that God was with him.

‘Let us have faith and patience, and be earnest in prayer,’ said the good old man, ‘and feel sure Thomas is turning from the evil of his ways, and that he yet will rejoice that he is living in the King’s loving favour. Oh, it is so nice! I will tell you, Jane, I often lie awake and think of how He is watching over those at sea. I must own I have done so more since Thomas left, for my life has been spent mostly in inland districts; but it is astonishing to me that sailors are such a reckless class, when they cannot fail to realize how very near they are to eternity. Our prayers ought to be more fervent for our brave men at sea, when we remember the many dangers they are exposed to, and the life of trial and hardship all round and about them. Yes, let us lift up our voices and cry unto Him, more earnestly than we do, for those in peril on the sea.’

When Jane had been in Scotland for more than two months, and Minnie had quite recovered from her illness, the post brought a letter one morning from worthy Mrs. Trigg, saying that the old man Turfy was very ill indeed, but that he was now quite happy, longing for the hour to come when he would depart to be with Christ. ‘Poor old man,’ wrote Mrs. Trigg, ‘he’d have liked to have seen you once more, sir, and sends you his respects and loving service; also his love to

Jane and to Minnie, his own sweet little dear, who, he says, did much for his soul. He's got Joe Brunton to make his will, and me and Jim Grimes have put our names to it as witnesses ; and I may as well tell you, sir, in case it takes you by surprise, that he's gone and left Clover to you, with money to pay for the poor beast's fare from London to Scotland, for he says as how you once told him you had a donkey when you were a boy, and your heart was nigh-hand broken when it died ; and so he thinks Clover would be sure to find a loving master in you, sir, for he cannot bear the very thought of the poor beast being left in London to fall into the hands of a common coster, who mayhap would ill-use it and make its poor sides and legs smart with his kicks and pinches. Mrs. Grimes is to have his song-lark ; and well she deserves it, for she's been kind to the old man, she has, and so has Jim ; and I am to have the cat, that is to say, if Trigg will let it stay peaceable, and not set his bull-dogs at it, as he did with the last. It was all for fun, for, with all his faults, Trigg ain't unkind to animals, big or little. But there's one thing he wanted me to write to you particular about, and that is, the little boy that Jane Martin may recollect something of, who used to hang about the shed, looking after Clover and often doing little errands for the old man. For some time back the boy has been staying in the house altogether, and turned out a good, steady lad. He is message-boy in a grocer's shop, and goes regularly to meeting, and is such a beautiful singer

that you hear his voice above all the other voices, let them sing ever so loud. There has been a man here looking after him, trying to get him to sing in one of the penny gaffs ; and Turfy, he thinks that when he's gone the boy may take to that life if something ain't done to keep him from it. If you could find any work for him near you, sir,—and he's a handy lad, and willing,—Turfy thinks the boy would gladly go, more especially if Clover was to be sent to you ; for he's very fond of the beast, and the beast of him. That's why I told you about the will, sir, though by rights it should not have been made known till after the poor old man was laid in his grave ; but both Joe Brunton and Mrs. Grimes thought it would be best to tell you beforehand. And this brings me to say that poor Joe comes regular to the mission-house now. It seems to do him good, and much he needs to be comforted, poor fellow, for his wife is worse than ever through drink. She's just killing herself, she is ; and as for the children, they are going to the bad as fast as they can if nothing is done to save them. It is a weary world, sir, even at the best of times ; but it's sad to think how a great deal of the distress and misery is brought upon our heads by our own selves. Joe sends his love to Jane, and to tell her that he is keeping a bright look-out for her sailor friend, and that he'll not let him be an hour in London, but ship him off to Scotland post haste.'

It seemed as if a little English colony was about to be formed in the far-away Highland glen ; but, to the astonish-

ment of all, Alison seemed to take quite a kindly interest not only in the idea of the donkey coming, but in the vagrant laddie, as she called Bill Stevens. 'She was quite sure there was plenty of work for him to do,' she said, 'and she had often thought of asking for a boy to help; for it was plainly to be seen old Alick was not fit for all the work in the garden and elsewhere, now that his rheumatics were so bad, and to get a man in by the day was just ruinous, with the wages double, ay, and in some cases treble, what they were in their grandfather's day.' So a letter was despatched to Mrs. Trigg, telling her to send the boy whenever she thought it advisable; and that, as for Clover, he would find a sweet Scotch thistle in the comfortable paddock, and a hearty welcome awaiting him.

It was only a few days after this letter had been sent off that news arrived of the old man's death, also that Clover and Bill Stevens had been despatched by steamer as directed, and might be expected to arrive in about a week's time. The poor old man, it seemed, had died quite peaceably,—indeed, was found dead in his bed in the attitude of prayer. 'He was very happy after Mr. Frazer's letter arrived,' wrote Mrs. Trigg, 'and declared that, now Clover and Bill were provided for, he had not a single wish, and that there wasn't a happier man in England than he was himself; for, though some people might think it sinful, he could not help feeling anxious till the future of his faithful old friend and companion was really settled.' He did nothing the last two or three



days but repeat the hymn Mr. Frazer had left with him, also saying over and over again some of Minnie's words about the angels, and breathing out blessings on her and Jane Martin. His last words were, 'Tell Jane I feel I *shall* meet them once more, and that already I am seeing the light beyond ;' and, wrote Mrs. Trigg, 'it was just beautiful to hear him, almost with his last breath, sing :

" Just as I am ; Thy love unknown  
Has broken every barrier down ;  
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come."

'A-weel,' said Ailie, trying in vain to keep back her tears, 'I have thought very little of the English folks for years, maybe because we see the worst specimens in the summer time, who come for their own pleasure, and aye wear a worldly look on their faces ; but I am thankful to say that there are some good Christian folk there as well, though I canna go in with their queer church service. It's my opinion that it's just to catch the senses ; but it's misleading, for what does the Lord care about whether a minister reads the Bible in a black gown or a white ? And as for the music, it's just to please a wheen senseless folk who have not brains enough to listen to a sermon of a wee half hour.'

'Ah ! Ailie, Ailie,' said Mr. Frazer, 'I see that you are not approving of what I said in the church last Sabbath about the psalmody class ; but let me tell you that the music

in some of the English churches refreshed my very soul many and many a time, and I would fain see it improved here. Why should we sing in a dull and lifeless manner when all the creatures seem to praise Him with their whole heart?

" Praise the Lord, for He is glorious!  
Never shall His promise fail;  
God has made His saints victorious;  
Sin and death shall not prevail.

Praise the God of our salvation!  
Hosts on high His power proclaim;  
Heaven and earth, and all creation,  
Laud and magnify His name! "







### CHAPTER XIII.

IN a few days the steamer arrived, bringing Bill Stevens and old Clover safely to land. The former was all life and animation, but the latter stood hanging his head and his tail in the most dejected manner, as heart-broken a donkey as could be seen. 'He hain't eaten mor'n a ha'p'orth o' hay for days, sir,' said Bill to Mr. Frazer; 'it's my notion he means to starve hisself to death, all on account o' poor old Turfy. He's missing him most hawful, and there's no rousing of him up out of his dull state.'

But when Clover was put into the paddock, and Minnie came running along to meet him, the poor old donkey became a changed creature. He sniffed, or seemed to do so, like a dog at the little girl's face; and when he was quite satisfied that she was really and truly the same that he used to have in his cart, and who had gathered daisies while his master cut the turf, then he shook off his melancholy fit, like the sensible donkey he was. Still it was pathetic to see him suddenly

pause, after having a good scamper round the paddock, at a patch of clover, and look round in all directions with a gentle neigh, as if he were calling the attention of some one to it.

'He's fancying old Turfy is a-hiding of hisself somewhere about,' said Bill Stevens. "'Clover used always to sniff out the best patches," the old man said. See now at him; he has missed him again, and his poor heart is nigh-hand broke. Come, good Moke, cheer up now!' added Bill, rubbing his face against the donkey's neck, as much to hide his own feelings; for Bill, with all his wild city Arab notions and ways, had in some points as tender a heart in his breast as a child.

'O Clover, good, nice Clover,' little Minnie used to say at such times, 'Mr. Turfy is away beside K'ist Jesus, and beside his own pretty wife, and his wee boy baby that was drowned; and you must not want him back again, Clover, for he's so happy with the angels all round about him. Poor old Clover,' she continued one day, '*you* will never see the angels wif the wings; for Jane says no donkeys, nor dogs, nor hens, nor little chicks, nor no animals go to heaven.'

'I don't think it will be a very nice place to go to, then,' said Bill. 'I'm sure Clover is as loving a hanimal, and as good as most folks,—ay, better behaved than some,—and I say it's a shame if he's to be shut out o' a good place.'

'Hush, hush!' said Minnie in her old-fashioned way; 'them are naughty finkings, Bill. God knows best, and He will know what to do with old Clover.'

It was a pleasant sight to see Alison sitting in her cosy chair by the side of the kitchen fire knitting her stocking, while Bill on a low stool close to her spelt out the words of his lesson, to be said to the minister by and by. From the first she had taken a strong liking to the boy, and was always showing him some kindness, though in a furtive sort of a way, as if she were a little ashamed of her softness of heart; but as no one took any notice of her, she gradually became more open with it, till at last it was an understood thing that Bill was Ailie's protegee, to be scolded and petted by turns, and treated as if he were her own son. She was never tired of knitting or darning stockings for him, and plenty of work he gave her in that way. The best of her flour scones were laid aside for him, and the Benjamin's portion of the puddings, till Mr. Frazer used laughingly to say Ailie looked quite cross if *he* asked for a second helping, in case there would not be enough for her pet; and the boy seemed to grow like a mushroom, and increase in health and strength, and was most dutiful to the kind old woman, running to ease her of the heavy milk-pails, or carry in coals, or break sticks, showing his affection in a thousand little acts of kindness daily.

One day when Ailie was alone with her mistress,—they were looking out on the park, where Bill and Minnie were playing with Clover the donkey, during the half-hour allotted to them for that purpose,—she turned to Miss Frazer, and said in a half whisper, ‘Do you not think he’s very like *him*, mem?’

‘Like who, Ailie?’ said Miss Frazer. ‘I don’t know who you mean.’

‘Like Alick Forrest. I got it into my head the moment I saw him, and he gets liker and liker to him every day.’

‘O Ailie, Ailie, what nonsense!’ said Miss Frazer; ‘I see no likeness whatever.’ But the next moment she was sorry she had said this, when she saw it made the old woman happier to think so, and added, ‘Well, but of course I was young then, Ailie, and forget what Alick was like; so you may be right.’

‘O woman, woman, what a strange creature you are!’ said Mr. Frazer, when told the story; meaning not Ailie alone, but the whole sex. ‘No wonder the Lord loved you; for He knew what kind, tender hearts you all have, full of forgiveness and compassion even toward your enemies.’

Some months had now elapsed, and still no word of Thomas Harris, and rumours began to reach the distant glen, of storms at sea and many casualties, and Jane Martin’s face began to wear a pained look, though she still exerted herself to do her work cheerfully. Mr. Frazer would occasionally take a walk to the nearest seaport town, more than five miles off, to hear if any news could be picked up of missing ships, and he and Jane watched the shipping news closely in the newspaper that the schoolmaster and the minister bought between them.

One morning, when thus engaged during breakfast, Mr.

Frazer uttered a distressed ‘Oh dear!’ and on his sister asking him what ailed him, he explained that there was a ship said to be lost, with all hands on board, bearing the same name as the one Thomas Harris had sailed in.

‘She’s gone down, with all hands, in the British Channel,’ he said. ‘Oh, it’s sad, sad, to think of the many seamen that have perished in these late hurricanes,—gone down in all the strength of their manhood, perhaps, or in the opening time of youth, with the bright future spreading out so temptingly before them! Ah!’ added the kind old man, whose heart was so tender that it could not bear to think of the lost souls that might be amongst that number, ‘it is to be hoped many, if not all of them, heard His voice sounding in their ears above the noise of the troubled waters, “Lean on me. Peace, troubled soul! I will lead thee through the dark valley and the shadow of death.” Only a shadow! Ah! it is so nice to think of that word,—a *shadow*, turned into a harmless shadow by His death! Oh that all distressed souls, no matter where they be, on sea or land, were able to sing—

“Lead, Saviour, lead; amid th’ encircling gloom

Lead Thou me on.

The night is dark, and I am far from home;

Lead Thou me on.”’

‘Yes, Andrew, it would be grand, as you say,—and oh, so nice!—to have such a complete trust in our Saviour! but, poor weak mortals as we are, even though He takes us by the



hand, we draw back as a frightened bairn does if we lead it along an unknown road in the dark. But, Andrew, what if it be true that Thomas Harris has gone down? Poor Jane, poor lassie, and all her modest providing ready,—oh, woe's me! I'm sorry for her.'

'It may not be true, you know,' said Mr. Frazer, his usually happy face wearing such a distressed look that showed he had little hope. 'There may be other ships of the same name, or Thomas may have escaped. Often, when it has been reported that a ship has gone down with all hands, the crew turn up somewhere or other, having managed to make their escape in their boats.'

'Well, I hope this report is not correct,' said Miss Frazer. 'At any rate, we had better not tell Jane till we hear more about it;' and the good woman carried off the newspaper at once to the schoolmaster's cottage, to prevent Jane from seeing the shipping news,—a circumstance that only made her suspect something was wrong, especially when she noticed that both Miss Frazer and her brother had something on their minds, though they tried to speak cheerfully to her. Mr. Frazer had at once written to Lloyds', and in a few days a letter was received in reply, leaving no doubt whatever that the unfortunate vessel was the one Thomas Harris had engaged to sail in for the outward and homeward voyages.

Then there fell a gloom upon the inmates of the little

manse, for Jane had become so dear to every one of them that her trouble was theirs. Ailie's face was a perfect picture of compassion, for she knew by sad experience how the girl was feeling; and it brought the tears to her mistress' eyes to see how tenderly the hitherto hard, stern woman treated this sister in affliction.

'Mr. Andrew used to tell me that the Lord would be better to me than a husband,' she said, laying bare her own closely-kept trouble in her anxiety to help Jane to bear hers. 'I could not see it for many long, weary years; but it's quite true, Jane. Oh yes, my lass, it's quite true; He will perfect His strength in your weakness.' And little Minnie, seeing Jane's tears, wept with her for sympathy. And Bill, 'whose horns had been growing,' as Miss Frazer said, and whose spirits required to be checked at times, in spite of Ailie's frowns, seemed unable to do anything but hang about the kitchen fire watching for an opportunity to offer any little service to his countrywoman and friend. Even old Clover seemed to feel the change that had come over every one, and would stand close by the paddock gate, hanging his head over it, and uttering every now and then one of his queer, pathetic little neighs, as if asking what was the matter.

At last the little group was roused up, not by any news of Thomas, but by a letter to Mr. Frazer, containing 'a call' to one of the most distant of our colonies, to take charge of a large congregation there. While he was in London, a gentle-

man had accidentally dropped into the little meeting-house, and, having heard the good man's sermon, he had written to his friends in his adopted home, saying he had found the very man most likely to suit them as a minister. They had been so well pleased with his report, that it ended in their asking him to take charge, offering him at the same time a salary so large that it took his breath away.

'I'm sorry they have mentioned money,' said Mr. Frazer, his face flushing; 'it almost feels like a bribe. But no, no, I must not have such naughty "finks," as Minnie would say. I daresay they are sensible men, and know a minister has as much need of riches as any man, for much is required from him. It is wrong to impute motives otherwise than sincere and kind to those who are anxious to spread the gospel in a distant land.'

From the first Miss Frazer felt sure her brother would decide to go, and she was too good a sister to stand in the way of his decision, whatever it might be. All she said was, 'May God guide you in your choice, my brother, and show you the place in His vineyard where you can work best for His glory.'

In a week from the time Mr. Frazer received the letter, he had made up his mind to accept, and arrangements were made to go as speedily as possible. It was not without sincere distress at the thought of parting with his little flock; for he had been many years beside them, and

knew their little histories, full of interest in themselves, and in many cases showing a large amount of bravery and courage. It was Ailie who was the worst about it, bad though many of his people were; and she kept declaring that Mr. Andrew was always ready to sacrifice himself, and that for her part she could not see why he could not content himself—a man at his years, too—to stay in his own country, where he could do as much work for the Master as anywhere,—for much work there was to be done,—without wandering away to the other side of the world in search of it.

But when she heard that there was a possibility of taking her favourite cow Molly, and the shepherd's dog Watch, and all the kitchen furniture, then she began to look a little more favourably upon the plan. It had never entered her mind for a moment to suppose she could remain behind if Mr. Andrew went; but once he decided, then, as a matter of course, she must go too, only she reserved the right to grumble about it.

'I'd just like to see how the minister could get on without *me*,' she said to old Sandy the beadle, who had hinted as much to her. 'Go away with you, Sandy Bruce, for a haverel,' she said. 'I should like to ken what like the minister's shirts and ties would be if Miss Annie had the doing o' them up. Na, na; I maun follow the minister wherever he has a mind to settle, if it should be to the

north pole itsel'; there's aye sic a work made about *it*, but nothing ever comes o't that I ever saw.'

But perhaps Bill Stevens' delight at the idea of the long voyage had more to do with her decision to go than anything else. 'It was so natural,' she said, 'that the boy should be carried away with the novelty.' His bright hopes and the wonderful castles he built seemed to act like a charm upon Ailie, who in the end entered into the preparations with as much energy as a young girl of sixteen might have done.

It was Jane Martin who was the quietest, and who said the least about it. In her heart she had a faint hope that Thomas Harris might still be alive, and she was greatly troubled in her mind what to do. Miss Frazer had asked her to accompany them, saying that Ailie was old, and she herself scarcely able to face the long voyage without a younger companion than Ailie; and Jane had promised that, if Thomas did not return before Mr. Frazer sailed, she would go with her kind, loving friends. She wrote to Mrs. Trigg, asking her to tell Joe Brunton and Jim Grimes to watch for him in case he should turn up after she had fairly started, though she could not but own to herself there would be little hope of his doing so if that were the case. Her letter resulted in Joe Brunton writing to ask leave to join the party with his children, his wife being newly dead. 'I shall, mayhap, have a better chance of getting on,' he said, 'in a

new place ; anyway, it will be better for the youngsters. And if you don't mind it, sir, I'd like to hear the name of the ship you are going to sail in, so that we could go in it too.'

There were more than Joe Brunton that made up their minds to follow Mr. Frazer, till at last he laughingly said he would require to charter a ship for himself and friends.

'I tell you, Annie, the way the people are making up their minds to follow me is like to make me cry,' he said one day, when he came in with the news that the old miller, who was supposed to be anything but sound in his religious views, and who vexed Mr. Frazer greatly with his argumentative talk, had made up his mind to sell the lease and good-will of the mill and go to the colonies too.

'You see, sir,' the miller said with a broad grin, 'if I were to stay here, I'd have no one to argue with. They'll most likely put a raw lad in your place, and where would be the satisfaction of talking to him? Na, na! I must just bundle up with the rest, and we'll have grand quiet times on the way out for a searching o' the Scriptures together.'

And there was old Agnes Kay, who had been confined to bed for a year, trying to persuade everybody, if she could only be carried on board, she felt sure she could stand the voyage, and that the climate was just the very thing for her ; indeed, that she felt sure she would get quite strong and well again. 'For,' she added, 'if I'm left alone, who is to tell me what I

ought to do, as he can, and point out the right way for me to walk in when the minister leaves?’

‘O Agnes, Agnes,’ said Mr. Frazer, stroking the poor woman’s hand gently, ‘have you forgotten the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother, and who forsakes you not? I may go to the other side of the world, but He remains with you here, and His ear is ever ready and His heart is ever willing to help a penitent sinner. Keep on singing, Agnes—

“Oh, fill me, Jesus, Saviour, with Thy love!  
Lead, lead me to the living fount above;  
Thither may I, in simple faith, draw nigh,  
And never to another fountain fly  
But unto Thee.”’





## CHAPTER XIV.

THE last Sabbath but one had arrived of the time after which Mr. Frazer must leave his old home for his new and distant one in the Australian colonies. He was to preach his last sermon on that occasion; for his friend, the minister whom he had been helping in the mission-house in London, was to occupy his pulpit on the last day, it being Mr. Frazer's earnest wish that his people should choose him as his successor. The little church was now crowded with an earnest congregation, all anxious to show their respect to their good pastor and friend, and eager to hear his last message to them. More than one had been talking about this day, and all were certain the minister would be sure to have something pithy to say, something that they would remember many days hence. When the text was given out, the congregation settled themselves determinedly into a listening attitude, Sandy Bruce, the beadle, looking round upon them from his seat by the pulpit with an expression on his face which plainly said, 'Didn't I say to ye it would be pithy?'



‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ These were the words of the text, simple in themselves, but powerful when elucidated in Mr. Frazer’s own peculiar style. ‘My friends, these are glorious words, “I will.” Who is this *I*? None but Jesus our Saviour. And what is it He is saying? “That He never will leave us nor forsake us.” Ah! this world is made up of partings and forsakings of one another, and we often cannot help ourselves; but oh, it is so nice to think that, no matter where we go, no matter where we dwell, if we have truly given ourselves to Christ, He will never leave us nor forsake us.’

At this point in the service Mr. Frazer observed a sailor slip quietly in at the door and seat himself on the end of a form that had been brought from the vestry, all the pews being full. Very few noticed the man, so intent were they listening to the sermon, but those who did guessed at once by his weather-beaten face that he had just returned from a long voyage. Mr. Frazer gave a quick glance towards Jane, but she was sitting with her back to the door and her eyes fixed upon his face, listening eagerly to the sermon.

‘Ah, yes, it is a world of parting and trial to many,’ continued Mr. Frazer; ‘but how good God is! He often brings those we love back again to us from the very grave, when we had given them up entirely. Ah, my friends, God is a loving Father, full of compassion and tender mercies towards all His children.’ It was very strange, but Jane said afterwards she

knew by these words and the expression in Mr. Frazer's face that Thomas was not only safe, but sitting in the church at that moment. She never looked round in search of him, but felt quite contented to sit and listen to the sermon to the end, and only a close observer would have discovered that there was anything unusual in her manner. At the end of the service Mr. Frazer managed to make a sign to Thomas to go round to the vestry, a sign which the latter was quick enough to understand; for the good man, not being aware of Jane's calm state of mind, was afraid the sudden shock would be too much for her, and was anxious to break it to her gently.

In a few minutes Thomas had explained that, when their vessel was lying in one of the ports, the captain's brother brought his ship in there too, some of the men being stricken with scurvy; and as both of the ships belonged to the same owners, the captain of Thomas' ship allowed one or two of the men to volunteer into his brother's vessel, Thomas being amongst the number.

'And lucky it was for us, sir,' said Thomas; 'for our poor old barkey, she's gone down, they tell me, with all hands aboard; and here am I, safe and sound, me and my two mates.'

'Ah, God has been good to you, you see, Thomas. You have indeed great occasion for thankfulness; for He has encompassed your path, your lying down and your rising up

have been known to Him, and he has most benefited you. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within thee, for the Lord thy God: He is good, and his benefits!"—is not this the language of your heart?

'Yes, sir; I can indeed say yes to that of my heart. After God, I owe it to you, Jane I'm a different man from when I was first married, do you think if I were to offer myself to the best and dearest of girls, Jane Martin, could I can look her honestly in the face and say that that drink has now no power over me.'

'If that be really the case, and I see it in your word, Thomas, I can heartily agree with you. I can look in a man's face and in his whole manner and feel when he is a free man; and this, I see, in your face. Looking at you, Thomas, I can say to myself, "That man is now broken." Jane is your wife, for she trusted in God that He would answer your prayers and keep you from falling.'

Jane had walked quietly back to the house, and Frazer and little Minnie, Bill Stevens and all were on more quickly before to prepare the coffee. Jane's sad look had quite disappeared from Jane's face. She looked so happy that Miss Frazer could hardly believe the change.

'Why, Jane, what has come over you, that you are to be treading on air, though you're trying to be so good.'

sermons always have a soothing effect ; but'—

me, as I came out at the church door, to the minister in the vestry. It's Thomas sure that he was in the church all the while the minister said about friends coming back

had to hear it, Jane, my dear,' said Miss Ham selfish enough in being vexed to think losers. And then there's Minnie; you'll bring her with us, Jane, my dear.'

light and satisfaction of every one, however, intimated his intention to join the little

'I'm free to go where I please, and to do as I like,' said to Jane; 'and it will be the finest thing to go out as a passenger. I've often thought to lie still in my bed when the watch was on a stormy night; and now I'll carry that time. You'll be all the better of a handy man on you all round; for the minister tells me he's never been to sea except one trip in a steamer to London, and he doesn't know whether his head or his heels were the worse for a sickness all the time.'

having been procured, Jane was married, with little Minnie acting as bridesmaid and her father as man. Ailie declined to be present, but

have been known to Him, and he has most abundantly blessed you. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits!"—is not this the language of your heart?'

'Yes, sir; I can indeed say yes to that from the bottom of my heart. After God, I owe it to you and my dear girl Jane I'm a different man from when I set out. But now, sir, do you think if I were to offer myself once more to that best and dearest of girls, Jane Martin, that she'd have me? I can look her honestly in the face and say I am a free man, that drink has now no power over me.'

'If that be really the case, and I see no reason to doubt your word, Thomas, I can heartily agree to it. There is a look in a man's face and in his whole manner that makes one feel when he is a free man; and this, I see, is the case with you. Looking at you, Thomas, I can say to myself, "The yoke that bound that man is now broken." Jane is ready to be your wife, for she trusted in God that He would hear her earnest prayers and keep you from falling.'

Jane had walked quietly back to the manse with Miss Frazer and little Minnie, Bill Stevens and Ailie having gone on more quickly before to prepare the coffee for lunch. The sad look had quite disappeared from Jane's face, and she looked so happy that Miss Frazer could not help noticing the change.

'Why, Jane, what has come over you, lassie? You seem to be treading on air, though you're trying to walk doucely



HARD TO WIN. *Page 158.*



along. The minister's sermons always have a soothing effect on you, I notice that; but'—

'Widow Tod told me, as I came out at the church door, that a sailor was with the minister in the vestry. It's Thomas come back. I felt sure that he was in the church all the time, after what the minister said about friends coming back from the grave.'

'Oh, I'm real glad to hear it, Jane, my dear,' said Miss Frazer; 'but yet I am selfish enough in being vexed to think we are to be the losers. And then there's Minnie; you'll have to let us take her with us, Jane, my dear.'

To the great delight and satisfaction of every one, however, Thomas Harris intimated his intention to join the little band of emigrants. 'I'm free to go where I please, and to do as I please,' he said to Jane; 'and it will be the finest thing in the world to go out as a passenger. I've often thought I'd like to be able to lie still in my bed when the watch was called, 'specially on a stormy night; and now I'll carry that notion out at this time. You'll be all the better of a handy man like me to wait on you all round; for the minister tells me he's never been at sea except one trip in a steamer to London, and that he didn't know whether his head or his heels were uppermost with sea-sickness all the time.'

A special licence having been procured, Jane was married on the Wednesday, little Minnie acting as bridesmaid and Bill Stevens as best man. Ailie declined to be present, but



she showed her hearty good-will towards the newly-married pair by preparing a sumptuous breakfast for them, excelling herself by the quantity and quality of the scones and cakes she had provided for them.

That afternoon the whole family were sitting in Miss Frazer's parlour, listening to some of Thomas' stories about the sea, when the door bell rang, and Ailie's voice was heard addressing some stranger, who seemed unable to make the good woman understand what she wanted. At a sign from Miss Frazer, Bill Stevens left the room, but returned in a moment afterwards, crying :

'Oh, sir, if it ain't old Mrs. Trigg ! She says she's walked most o' the way here ; for old Trigg's dead, he is, and she'—

'Bring her in—bring the worthy woman in,' said Mr. Frazer, rising to meet her at the parlour door.

Poor Mrs. Trigg's story was soon told,—how her husband had met with an accident, and how he had died in the hospital, and how she had sold off all her possessions and set out for Scotland, in the hope that she might be able to get some work, so that she might be near Mr. Frazer and Jane.

'And now I hear you are all setting out to the other side of the world, sir,' she said, 'and I find I've done a foolish thing.'

'Not at all, Mrs. Trigg,' said Mr. Frazer cheerily. 'What's to hinder you from joining us ? The more the merrier. Leave me to settle that, my good woman. There will be a church door

to take charge of where we are going, and I can safely tell my new people I could not get a kinder friend than you, Mrs. Trigg, to look after my comfort in the vestry. Was there ever such a happy man as I am myself?' he added, looking round with a beaming countenance on the little group. 'Of a truth, my cup runneth over !

" Then all is peace and light  
This soul within :  
Thus shall I walk with Thee,  
The loved Unseen ;  
Leaning on Thee, my God,  
Guided along the road—  
Nothing between ! " "

'Amen,' said Thomas Harris in his deep sailor tone, responding for himself and for the whole of the group.

Mr. Frazer and his little band of followers were to embark from Glasgow, where they were to meet Joe Brunton and his children, who were already there, Joe being afraid, apparently, that he would be left behind. It was a sad leave-taking between Mr. Frazer and his flock of faithful adherents. Indeed, the good man said if he had known how they would sorrow for his absence, he could never have made up his mind to go. But the last good-bye was said, and the train started, Minnie being the loudest in her distress at the idea of leaving poor old Clover behind.

'He'll come and neigh for Bill and me over the gates, and

he'll think it so very unkind of us to leave him,' she sobbed. 'Oh, Mr. Frazer, please take Clover too.'

But that was out of the question, and she was consoled at last by hearing that Sandy Bruce was to look after him in the meantime; and if Mr. Hamilton was made minister, his little children would be good and kind to the poor forsaken donkey.

There does not remain much to be told. It is a sad sight to see an emigrant ship preparing for sea. There are so many sad and anxious faces amongst the crowd, though the cheery looks of the younger passengers seem to make the friends seeing them off feel more like to cry; for one cannot help asking oneself, Will their bright hopes ever be realized?

Mr. Frazer was amongst the latter, bustling here, there, and everywhere, to say a word to this desponding mother, whose little ones began to be fractious on her hands, or to that young woman who was getting home-sick already. An old gentleman, a chaplain who visited every ship before starting, to leave with them a few tracts and a great many kindly words of advice, was holding a meeting down in the single women's quarter, and it was a picture to see Mr. Frazer's face as he paused at the open gangway to listen to the hymn that was being sung—feebly, it was true, for the hearts joining in it were full:—

'My Saviour, be Thou near me  
Through life's night;

I cry, and Thou wilt hear me—  
Be my light.  
My dim sight, aching,  
Gently Thou'rt making  
Meet for awaking  
Where all is bright.

'Through time's swelling ocean  
Be my Guide;  
From tempest's wild commotion  
Hide, oh hide!  
Life's crystal river  
Storms ruffle never;  
Anchor me ever  
On that calm tide.'

'Ah, may God grant that we may all be found, when the sands of time have sunk, safe in the arms of Jesus in Emmanuel's land!' said Mr. Frazer, gazing round upon those who were gathered round the cabin doorway listening to the singing down below.

It was now time to say farewell. The few friends who had come to see the passengers away, stepped down into the steamer lying alongside; the cannon was got ready, and, after a breathless interval, during which the sobs of the women were distinctly heard, the match was applied, and the deep boom over the waters was the signal for a hearty cheer from all, both from those on board and from those on the steamer, and a hearty 'God bless you and keep you' from the chaplain, while Mr. Frazer waved his hand in reply, with an answering—'In Him do we put our trust.'

Thomas Harris stood with Jane leaning on his arm, his face the happiest of the whole ship's company. And well it might be, as he had said himself, for he had cause to show a thankful heart for ever and ever.

'That's right,' said Mrs. Trigg, who happened to overhear his words. 'You've got a treasure of a wife, Thomas—a great gift in itself; but it's a happy thing when a man owns that he knows when the Lord is good to him.'

The ship sailed away into the wide waste of waters; but God guided it through, and in due time it reached its appointed haven in safety. Need we add that Mr. Frazer is happy in his new home? He was a man who would be happy anywhere, as even Ailie owned; but here he seemed to beam over with gratitude to God, for he found plenty of useful work before him,—just what suited him, too, for the whole aim of his life had been to spend and be spent in his Master's service. Of him it could be truly said he was

'Sowing the seed by the daylight fair,  
Sowing the seed by the noonday glare;  
Sowing the seed by the fading light,  
Sowing the seed in the solemn night.  
*Sure, ah sure, will the harvest be!'*







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